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The New York Times
INTERNATIONAL EDITION | MONDAY, AUGUST 24, 2026

The Houthis are showing their strength

Alexandra Stark

OPINION

Just a few years ago, Yemen's Houthi rebels were second- or third-tier members of Iran's "Axis of Resistance," prompting policymakers to treat them as a subsidiary of Tehran. But while they benefit from Iranian weapons, training and know-how, the Houthis also have their own interests at heart — and behave accordingly.

This armed group that controls much of northern Yemen is in position to shape the next phase of the conflict between the United States and Iran if they attempt to renew their blockade of the Bab al-Mandab Strait. The Houthis could reignite the war in Yemen, scuttle efforts to make a deal with Iran and draw the United States even deeper into the region's conflicts.

A key assumption going into the U.S.-Israeli attack on Iran, which began in February, was that Iran's proxy militias had been critically weakened. Hezbollah, the militant group in Lebanon that was once Iran's most powerful partner in the region, suffered heavy blows from Israel during the Gaza war, as did Hamas. Iran lost another key ally when Bashar al-Assad's regime in Syria collapsed in December 2024.

No one should assume that a U.S. deal with Iran will bind what the rebel group in Yemen does next.

The Houthis, whose military capacity had also been weakened by U.S. strikes in 2024-25, did not jump back into the fray right away when the United States and Israel began striking Iran this year, seemingly sparing them similar blows.

Perhaps they were biding their time. Because of a quirk of geography, the Houthis are able to disrupt commercial traffic in the Bab al-Mandab Strait, a choke point at the entry to the Red Sea, through which 12 percent to 15 percent of maritime trade travels. At the other end of the Red Sea lies the Suez Canal, a vital route for oil and liquefied natural gas headed to North American and European markets. With Iran effectively closing the Strait of Hormuz, the Houthis are now in an unusually powerful position.

They have come far in global influence since seizing Yemen's capital, Sanaa, in 2014 and expelling the internationally recognized government from the city in early 2015. When the rebel forces pushed south in March of that year, in an attempt to take over territory in southern Yemen, a coalition led by Saudi Arabia and backed by

STARK, PAGE 10

The New York Times publishes opinion from a wide range of perspectives in hopes of promoting constructive debate about consequential questions.

Clues on the next pandemic

PHOTOGRAPHS BY SEBASTIÁN LÓPEZ BRACH FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Testing for Argentine hemorrhagic fever at a laboratory in Rosario, Argentina. After a decades-long dormancy, the virus is spreading to places it had previously never been seen.

In South America, viruses that spread from animals to humans are on the rise

BY ZANE IRWIN
AND LUCÍA CHOLAKIAN HERRERA

By the time colleagues called Dr. Matías Lahitte, an Argentine infectious disease specialist, it was too late.

The patient they asked him to examine last month was a 65-year-old woman from Rosario, Argentina's third-largest city. She had a high fever, muscle pain and fatigue. A blood test indicated her white-blood cell and platelet counts were dangerously low.

Less than a week later, she was dead. Test results revealed that she had contracted Argentine hemorrhagic fever, or A.H.F., a rare disease carried by rodents that both the United States and Soviet Union once researched as a potential agent for biological weapons.

"It is remarkable that it is not discussed more," Dr. Lahitte said of the disease, which can cause internal bleeding, seizures and comas. "The illness is persistent and debilitating."

The woman's death is part of a surprising resurgence of the disease in Argentina, which after a decades-long dormancy is spreading to places it had previously never been seen. As human development, environmental degradation and climate change fragment and alter animal habitats, scientists warn that zoonoses — diseases that jump from animals to humans — are becoming more frequent and widespread.

Rosario, Argentina's third-largest city. Urbanization is pushing humans into closer contact with many disease-carrying animals, like the rodents that carry A.H.F.

Climate change is nudging animals, like the rodents that carry A.H.F., into new areas and bringing previously separated species into contact with one another. A 2022 study estimated that more than half of known human pathogenic diseases could be aggravated by climate change. And human activities like agriculture and urbanization are pushing humans into closer contact with many disease-carrying animals.

"Because of all the changes in climate, and also changes in how humans react to climate, we are basically expanding the human footprint on places where it hasn't been," said Dr. Pranav Kulkarni, a researcher at the University of California, Davis, who studies rodent-borne diseases in South America.

About three-quarters of emerging infectious diseases in humans come from animals, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Dr. Kulkarni hopes that research like his, which aims to predict how climate change and human activity affect the spread of disease, could help local health officials catch future outbreaks — before they metastasize into the next global pandemic.

"Any one of these vector-borne or animal-borne or rodent-borne diseases might be a good candidate for the next big thing," he said.

Until recently, the Rosario patient's case would have been an anomaly. Since A.H.F.'s discovery in the 1950s, it has almost exclusively affected male farm workers in Argentina's fertile plains, outside urban areas. But the infected woman lived in the center of the city and was not a farmer.

The Argentine health authorities counted nearly 60 confirmed cases of A.H.F. in 2022 — about three times the number five years earlier, according to government data. And there were outbreaks in 2024 and 2025, which collectively killed at least nine people.

PANDEMIC, PAGE 4

Canada risks plenty in standing up to the U.S.

NEWS ANALYSIS
TORONTO

By refusing Trump's deal, Carney puts his country's economy on the line

BY MATINA STEVIS-GRIDNEFF

On Friday night, Prime Minister Mark Carney of Canada did something that few other world leaders before him have dared to do.

After days of intense trade negotiations with the United States, with less than an hour to go on a midnight deadline for a new round of tariffs from the Trump administration, Mr. Carney instructed his negotiators to walk away.

Then, he announced that once 50 percent tariffs came into effect on $20 billion worth of Canadian goods, he would order retaliatory tariffs on the United States "dollar for dollar."

Then on Saturday, in a lengthy televised address to Canadians, Mr. Carney brought fighting words to Canada's act of defiance.

"Last spring, I warned that America is trying to break us so that they can own us. And I promised: 'That will never, ever happen.' We are keeping that promise," Mr. Carney said somberly, before reporters in Ottawa.

"Canada is becoming stronger and less dependent on America. We are already giving ourselves more than they can take away. And we are just getting started," he added.

By walking away, Mr. Carney chose a road that no major U.S. ally has taken: With his country's economy on the line, he stood up to President Trump and refused to accept the administration's offer of a new trade relationship with tariffs permanently baked in. Britain, the European Union and other major U.S. trading partners have agreed to smaller deals that have been volatile and often left them worse off.

The collapse of the talks came after Mr. Trump declared on Tuesday that the deal was practically done.

Mr. Carney never echoed that. Over the week, as negotiators spent long hours in Washington huddled in the office of the U.S. trade representative, Mr. Carney appeared optimistic but insisted that there was still work to be done.

Until there wasn't.

Each side now claims that the other introduced new or unreasonable demands at the last minute — the kind of finger-pointing that is common when

CANADA, PAGE 8

ODD ARRAY OF TARGETS FOR LEVIES
U.S. shoppers will find dog muzzles, national flags and capes imported from Canada more expensive. *PAGE 8*

U.S. ECONOMY COULD FEEL STING
A tit-for-tat trade fight between two allies may create new headaches for consumers and businesses. *PAGE 8*

RONALD MARTINEZ/GETTY IMAGES

The Duke and Duchess of Sussex watching a baseball game in Los Angeles last year. The couple left Britain for California in 2020 after clashing with the royal family.

Royal couple joins the list of faded showbiz hopefuls

LOS ANGELES

Harry and Meghan find there is no easy path to success in Hollywood

BY NICOLE SPERLING
AND SHAWN HUBLER

It began with such high hopes.

The Duke and Duchess of Sussex landed in Hollywood in 2020, flush with a multimillion-dollar Netflix deal and a promise that the duo, scorned by the royal family, would make a slew of inspirational programming.

Two years later, "Harry & Meghan" the Netflix six-part docuseries on the couple's departure from Britain, generated 23.4 million views in its initial release, immediately topping the company's charts as the most watched ever for the first four days of a documentary. In total, the program has garnered 70 million views since its debut.

Nothing else Prince Harry and his wife, Meghan, ever made for the service — whether it was "Live to Lead," a seven-episode interview show with world leaders, or "Polo," a docuseries about the sport — reached such heights.

In 2025, the Netflix deal was not renewed. A similarly lofty agreement at Spotify also fell short of expectations.

And as Americans asked in recent days why the couple was leaving their West Coast idyll, Hollywood observers pointed to one of the most enduring themes in the history of Southern California: show business aspirations that failed.

"There has always been this aura here, this magical thinking," said Leo Braudy, a Los Angeles cultural historian and the author of "The Frenzy of Renown: Fame and Its History." "Every-

ROYALS, PAGE 2

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Issue Number
No. 44,613

PAGE TWO

A royal couple's faded Hollywood dreams

ROYALS, FROM PAGE 1

body thinks, 'I'm beautiful,' or 'I'm handsome.' Everybody thinks, 'If those people can make it in Hollywood, so can I.'"

But most people don't make it, he said, and throughout history, even otherwise wealthy and powerful people have mistakenly imagined that success in other fields would automatically translate to show business glory.

"If there was an easy path to success in show business," Mr. Braudy said, "there would be a lot fewer flops in Hollywood."

The Duke and Duchess made waves last week on both sides of the Atlantic after people familiar with the decision confirmed that they were returning to England.

Six years ago, the couple, after clashing with the royal family, had exiled themselves to California, where the duchess had grown up and once had an acting career in Los Angeles.

Settling into a sprawling estate in the wealthy enclave of Montecito, Calif., the couple raised two children, Archie, 7, and Lilibet, 5.

But they now have enrolled their children in school in Britain and timed the move to coincide with the start of classes next month, according to people who spoke to The New York Times.

It is unclear whether they will start new business ventures or where they will live in Britain. (They were told to vacate their official residence on the grounds of Windsor Castle in 2023, the couple's press secretary said at the time.)

A representative for the couple on Friday framed their departure from California as a short-term move.

"On the heels of a wonderful trip with family and friends this summer, Harry and Meghan have decided to spend an extended period in the U.K. this autumn," the representative said in a statement. "They are excited to have their children spend more time in the country that's such an important part of their family's story."

The royal couple's fortunes began contrasting when Netflix did not renew their overall deal last year.

In its place, the streaming giant established a much less generous pact, which still exists, whereby they would be paid only if they produced a show or a film Netflix was interested in airing. (The streaming giant still pays for office space at Raleigh Studios in Hollywood for the couple's company, Archewell Productions.)

Separately, Netflix constructed a joint business deal with Meghan for "As Ever," her nascent lifestyle brand which drafted off her television show, "With Love, Meghan." An accompanying endeavor would sell products like a $28 orange blossom honey and a $14 apricot spread.

NETFLIX

Initial interest in the royal couple's media productions was not sustained in later projects. The TV show "With Love, Meghan," above, did not perform up to Netflix's standards.

Netflix manufactured those products through its consumer product group in a revenue-sharing deal.

But the show didn't perform up to Netflix's standards: The first season attracted 6.1 million views, the second season earned 2.3 million views and the Christmas special had 2.6 million views.

Netflix decided to not greenlight any new seasons and ended the brand endeavor in March. Now all consumer goods are handled by Meghan's own company. (The $12 blackberry jam is still available on the website.)

> **"Everybody thinks, 'If those people can make it in Hollywood, so can I.'"**

The duo's foray into podcasts didn't go as planned, either.

In 2020, they signed a $20 million deal with Spotify. But they only produced one season of "Archetypes," in which Meghan hosted and interviewed guests such as Serena Williams and Paris Hilton.

Harry never made anything, despite workshopping ideas with the company for a year. (One idea, said one person close to the couple, was taste-testing hot chocolate around the country.)

It is unclear whether they were paid the full amount of the three-year deal, considering they only made one 12-episode season. A representative for the couple declined to comment. Spotify also declined to comment.

In 2023, Jeremy Zimmer, then the head of United Talent Agency, sat for an interview at the Cannes Lion marketing festival with Semafor, a digital news site, just one week after the Spotify deal fizzled and defined the problem: "Turns out Meghan Markle was not a great audio talent, or necessarily any kind of talent. And, you know, just because you're famous doesn't make you great at something."

Bill Simmons, a Spotify executive and prominent podcaster, was more blunt. He called the couple "grifters," using an expletive, in a 2023 podcast after the Spotify deal fell apart.

Meghan's most recent project, "Cookie Queens," a documentary about the Girl Scouts and their cookie sale ambitions that she executive produced, was not a huge hit at the box office. ("CatVideoFest 2026," a film that compiled the best cat videos on the internet, out grossed hers.)

Yet, according to Howard Cohen, the distributor of the movie through his Roadside Attractions company, the movie will ultimately be a success.

Released on only 446 screens, the film is nearing $1 million at the box office and will be available to rent through streaming on Sept. 8. With documentaries struggling in theaters, the movie is, in fact, the highest-grossing noncelebrity documentary to be released so far this year.

Meghan's appearance at both Sundance, where it initially debuted, and at screenings in Los Angeles and Ojai helped buoy those numbers, Mr. Cohen said in an interview.

Meghan will also appear in the Amazon Prime movie "Close Personal Friends" that is set to be released on the streaming service next spring. The film stars Brie Larsen and Lily Collins and is set in Santa Barbara. Meghan plays herself in a cameo.

The duchess has also been in early talks to appear in the third season of the Netflix crime series "The Gentlemen." Should the deal come to fruition, Meghan would film the role in Britain. (The second season has yet to air and Netflix has yet to greenlight a third.)

At least one Hollywood veteran was upbeat about their return to Britain.

"My first thought was, smart play!" said Spencer Pratt, the reality television star who ran unsuccessfully for Los Angeles mayor this year. "Show business in the U.K. is booming, unlike here."

He said his wife, Heidi Montag, a reality television star who was a fan of Meghan's lifestyle show, "got all emotional" last week at the possibility that Prince Harry might be reconciling with the royal family.

In Britain, he said, the couple could take advantage of tax breaks for film and television production, and use their own "palaces and castles" as backdrops.

"From a business perspective, I think they have more potential to make content for Netflix or Paramount Plus or whoever from England," he added. "I personally would already watch a season of, like, 'With Love, Meghan and Harry: Back to the Pond.'"

How the couple's new life in Britain will affect their show business prospects is uncertain. Like many whose Hollywood dreams fall short, Harry and Meghan are moving away but have not ruled out a return.

A representative of Harry and Meghan said the couple's businesses were continuing unchanged. And they will still have a toehold in the United States, as they are keeping their $14.5 million home in Montecito.

She shared a busy secretary of state's whirlwind life

NANCY KISSINGER
1934-2026

BY ROBERT D. MCFADDEN

Nancy Kissinger, the widow of former Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger, who shared his whirlwind life of international diplomacy — and then of tarnished celebrity, as a controversial elder statesman — for half a century, died on Thursday at her home in South Kent, Conn. She was 92.

Her death was announced by her family.

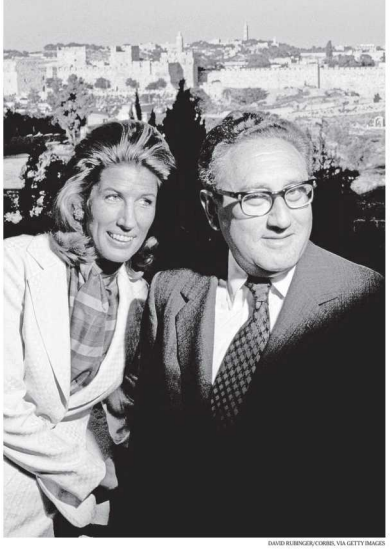
Politically savvy, well versed in global issues and fiercely protective of her husband's name, Mrs. Kissinger traveled widely with him on diplomatic missions after their 1974 marriage. And when Mr. Kissinger stepped down three years later, they became a familiar Washington couple at state dinners, embassy parties and Republican White House receptions.

The Kissingers were also among the most visible couples in New York City, their principal residence, attending museum openings, fashion shows by Bill Blass and Oscar de la Renta, and charity fund-raisers. Since the early 1980s, their summer and weekend retreat from social obligations had been an estate in South Kent.

"To the men and women who know her well," The New York Times quoted one friend as saying after the wedding, "Mrs. Kissinger is an intelligent, capable and warm woman, with a great deal of charm, a good sense of humor and an iron sense of integrity."

Mrs. Kissinger's glamorous life was hardly devoid of trouble, and some of it had to do with her husband's hotly disputed reputation. As secretary of state from 1973 to 1977 under Presidents Richard M. Nixon and Gerald R. Ford, Mr. Kissinger pioneered the policy of détente with the Soviet Union; orchestrated the postwar opening of relations with China; engaged in shuttle diplomacy in the Middle East to end the Arab-Israeli war of 1973, also known as the Yom Kippur War; and helped negotiate the Paris Peace Accords, ending American involvement in the Vietnam War, for which he shared the Nobel Peace Prize.

For all his honors, he remained a polarizing figure, accused by journalists and human rights activists of war crimes for supporting the bombing of Hanoi and an invasion of Cambodia during the Vietnam War; for encouraging a military coup against the socialist government of Salvador Allende in Chile; and for signaling a green light to an Argentine military junta for its "dirty war" against dissidents.

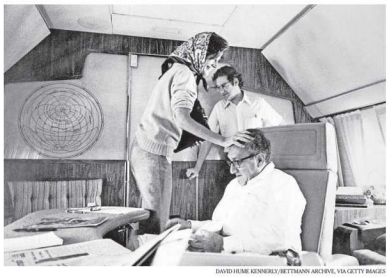


DAVID RUBINGER/CORBIS, VIA GETTY IMAGES

GUY DELORT/WWD/PENSKE MEDIA, VIA GETTY IMAGES

JP YIM/GETTY IMAGES

Nancy Kissinger, clockwise from left: with her future husband, Henry A. Kissinger, in Jerusalem in 1970; at a party at the British Embassy in Washington in 1974, the year she married Mr. Kissinger; in New York in 2018; and with her husband on a flight between Egypt and Israel in 1975, part of Mr. Kissinger's Mideast shuttle diplomacy.



DAVID HUME KENNERLY/BETTMANN ARCHIVE, VIA GETTY IMAGES

In 1982, walking through a terminal at Newark International Airport, the Kissingers were accosted by Ellen Kaplan, a follower of Lyndon H. LaRouche, a cult leader with both Marxist and right-wing associations. She shouted insults at both Kissingers, and witnesses said that Mrs. Kissinger grabbed the heckler by the throat and threatened to throttle her.

Months later, in a two-hour trial in Newark Municipal Court, Mrs. Kissinger testified that she had been escorting her husband to Boston for a triple-bypass heart operation and that he was under a doctor's orders to avoid "upset of any kind." The judge dismissed a misdemeanor charge of simple assault against Mrs. Kissinger, saying that there had been no bodily injury.

In the decade before their marriage, his second, Mr. Kissinger dated the film stars Jill St. John, Liv Ullmann, Shirley MacLaine, Marlo Thomas and others. But his most frequent companion was Nancy Maginnes.

The wedding of Ms. Maginnes, 39, and Henry Kissinger, 50, took place in Arlington, Va., on March 30, 1974, and while it was attended by only a handful of guests and not disclosed until it was over, it was one of the most heavily covered social events of the year. The Times published the news at the top of Page 1 and followed it with a detailed profile of the bride.

She was a foreign policy specialist for the Commission on Critical Choices for Americans, a creation of former Gov. Nelson A. Rockefeller of New York. Mr. Rockefeller had been the bride's employer and Mr. Kissinger's friend and political ally for years, and had introduced them at Harvard University in Massachusetts, where Mr. Kissinger was teaching and Ms. Maginnes became one of his students.

Mr. Kissinger's 15-year first marriage to Ann Fleischer had ended in divorce in 1964. They had two children, who both attended the wedding, along with the bride's brother David and her mother, Agnes Maginnes. Mr. Kissinger's brother, Walter, and his wife were also there, as was Carlyle Maw, a State Department legal adviser.

After the brief civil ceremony, performed by Judge Francis Thomas Jr. of Arlington County Court, the newlyweds flew in Mr. Rockefeller's private jet to Acapulco, Mexico, for a 10-day honeymoon.

A dozen Secret Service agents, 20 Mexican police officers and 40 journalists shadowed their every move. Sailing aboard a sloop on Acapulco Bay, Mr. Kissinger kept a protective arm around his new wife, as a motorboat filled with the press corps followed.

They made a striking couple, not least because the ash-blond, chain-smoking Mrs. Kissinger was nearly six feet tall (183 centimeters), while her husband, recognized around the world, was only 5-foot-8 (173 centimeters). But friends said that they were a good match, intellectually and emotionally, and described them as inseparable.

Two months after the honeymoon, Mrs. Kissinger demonstrated her ambassadorial panache by joining her husband's continuing shuttle diplomacy in the Middle East, standing for photo ops with Arab and Israeli leaders in various capitals, and attending Mr. Kissinger's airborne news briefings in her stockinged feet. Her presence was highlighted in Israeli, Arab and American newspapers.

That autumn, she accompanied Mr. Kissinger to the Soviet Union for his talks with the Communist leader Leonid Brezhnev on cuts to strategic nuclear arms, and then flew to New Delhi on the second leg of a three-week diplomatic trip to more than a dozen countries. Friends said her poise helped to hide the anxieties that landed her in a hospital with ulcers soon after their return.

In 2009, Mrs. Kissinger testified in a criminal court case in New York against Anthony D. Marshall, the son of her friend the philanthropist Brooke Astor, who had died two years before. Mr. Marshall had been charged with defrauding his mother's estate of millions by inducing her to change her will in his favor after her mental capacity had faded. Mr. Marshall was convicted and sentenced to a prison term.

Nancy Sharon Maginnes was born in Manhattan on April 13, 1934, the third child and only daughter of Albert B. Maginnes and Agnes (McKinley) Maginnes. Her father, a former pro football player, was a trusts and estates lawyer in White Plains, N.Y., where Nancy and her two brothers grew up.

> **Her frequent presence made her as recognizable to some around the globe as presidents and cabinet secretaries.**

She graduated from the Masters School in Dobbs Ferry, N.Y., in 1951, and from Mount Holyoke College in Massachusetts in 1955 with a bachelor's degree in history. She took postgraduate courses at the University of California, Berkeley.

In 1964, she went to work for Mr. Kissinger on a Rockefeller task force and took a job with the Rockefeller Brothers Fund after Mr. Kissinger left to join the Nixon administration in 1969.

The Kissingers had no children. Mr. Kissinger died in 2023. Mrs. Kissinger's brother Bristol died in the early 1980s, and her brother David, in 2020. She is survived by two stepchildren, Elizabeth Vandermark and David Kissinger, and five step-grandchildren.

Mrs. Kissinger was never officially an American diplomat. But her omnipresence made her as recognizable to some around the globe as presidents and cabinet secretaries. In 2007, when a reporter for The Times entered a shop in Damascus, Syria, the owner pointed to photos on the wall of well-known figures who had been there.

"That's Jimmy Carter," he said, "that's Warren Christopher, and that's Nancy Kissinger."

Ash Wu contributed reporting.

World

Little evidence of an autocrat's indulgence

BUDAPEST DISPATCH

Hungarians find offices of Viktor Orban are not what they had expected

BY ANDREW HIGGINS

PHOTOGRAPHS BY AKOS STILLER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Visitors on a balcony with a view of the Danube that Viktor Orban, the former prime minister of Hungary, had built off his offices at a former monastery in Budapest. Below left, the small bedroom off Mr. Orban's former office. Below right, the meeting room where Mr. Orban used to hold cabinet meetings. "I'm a bit disappointed," one visitor said.

Ferdinand Marcos, the longtime dictator of the Philippines, suffered the indignity after losing power. So did Viktor Yanukovych, Ukraine's kleptocratic leader, and Nicolae Ceausescu, Romania's Communist tyrant.

All had their private offices, off limits to all but loyal courtiers for years, suddenly thrown open to the public. Throngs of people clumped through their quarters, marveling in disgust at over-the-top, gold-trimmed décor and extravagant luxury.

Viktor Orban, the prime minister of Hungary for 16 years until his humiliating defeat in an April election, was never a despot, but his downfall has still opened his long sealed inner sanctum to the public gaze.

For the past three months, Mr. Orban's suite of offices in a lavishly renovated 17th-century Carmelite monastery overlooking the Danube River has been crowded with Hungarians eager for a peek inside the rooms from where their country was run.

Peter Magyar, Mr. Orban's successor as prime minister, started the stampede shortly after he was sworn into office, in May. He visited the former monastery, known as Carmelita, livestreaming his wanderings through empty corridors of deposed power and declaring them "a symbol of the lordliness, opulence and lies" of Mr. Orban's rule.

As an exercise in political theater designed to shock, however, the opening up of Carmelita has disappointed some visitors. The building's interior is not particularly opulent and looks more like a high-end boutique hotel than a spendthrift dictator's pleasure dome.

In Mr. Magyar's telling, Mr. Orban's election defeat was not a routine democratic transition but "a total regime change" and was the start of what he calls "Operation Cleansing Fire," the exposure and purge of the previous government's wasteful extravagance.

Balazs Orban, the former prime minister's political director, said Mr. Magyar was trying to fuel a fiction. "Our liberal political enemies always accused us of being dictators, but we never crossed the line," he said, noting that Mr. Orban accepted his election defeat without complaint and made no attempt to hang on to his offices in Carmelita.

"The conservative experiment is over for the moment, and we will see whether the Hungarian people will like this new experiment or not," he said. Mr. Magyar is a conservative, too, but rallied many liberals to his side.

Guided tours of Carmelita, perched on a hill in Budapest's castle district, have given more than 25,000 people a chance to see fine artwork hanging on the walls and to enjoy a spectacular view of the Hungarian capital spread across both sides of the Danube.

"I was surprised that it was not more luxurious," Aviko Acsai, 54, said after a recent visit with her husband. "I expected more grandiosity and pomp."

Her husband, Andras Veszpremi, 55, was also underwhelmed. "I'm a bit disappointed," he said, grumbling that he "was expecting to see the cigar room." An adjacent building used by Mr. Orban's cabinet chief does have a cigar room — shown off with glee by Mr. Magyar in a separate live-streamed visit — but there is no sign of one at Carmelita.

Nor is there anything like the four-pound solid gold paperweight in the shape of a loaf of bread that President Yanukovych of Ukraine left on his desk when he fled to Russia in 2014. There is not even Mr. Orban's desk; he took it with him.

The only hint of gilt bling is the faux gold patine on an elevator door. Expensive oil paintings by celebrated Hungarian artists decorate the walls, but they are all on loan from the national museum.

Public interest has still been huge, and the state property agency that owns the building restricts access to people who sign up for entry tickets online. The waiting list is weeks long.

With no evidence of opulent living on display, Mr. Magyar focused during his tour of Carmelita on two paper shredders left behind by Mr. Orban, decrying what he said were the previous government's efforts to destroy incriminating documents.

Mr. Orban and his ministers, he said, "thought that all documents could be shredded or deleted — but I am sure this is not the case." A priority task for his new government, he said, will be setting up a National Asset Recovery and Protection Office to return and safeguard state assets that he believes were stolen by the previous government.

Fidesz, the former governing party of Mr. Orban, has condemned efforts to recover what the new government says are stolen assets as evidence of Mr. Magyar's "aggressive tyranny."

For visitors, the main draw of Carmelita is that it loomed so large for years in their imaginations as a closed, secret world atop a hill in which Mr. Orban plotted Hungary's transformation to "illiberal democracy." It appeared daily in opposition media outlets as shorthand for Mr. Orban's style of politics — haughty, self-absorbed and increasingly detached from voters' concerns.

One of Mr. Magyar's first moves after his Tisza party's landslide election victory in April was to announce that he would not move into Carmelita but relocate the prime minister's office from the hilltop in Buda to a drab office block near Parliament on the other side of the Danube, the flat land of Pest where most people live. This, he said four days after the vote, would demonstrate the new government's determination to break with Mr. Orban's "regime."

Prime Minister Peter Magyar declared the offices "a symbol of the lordliness, opulence and lies" of Mr. Orban's rule.

The former prime minister's political director scoffed at Mr. Magyar's decision not to take over Mr. Orban's offices in Carmelita as empty virtue signaling, deriding his choice of an "ugly, irrelevant building" on the other side of the Danube.

Carmelita has seen many residents come and go in the more than 300 years since it was built. The three-story building was originally constructed to house an austere order of monks dedicated to contemplative prayer. The land was previously the site of a mosque built during Hungary's occupation by Ottoman Turks.

The monks were booted out in the late 18th century after the Hapsburg emperor dissolved their order and turned their monastery into a theater. Beethoven and Joseph Haydn performed there.

The theater survived centuries of turmoil but was badly damaged at the end of World War II, when Nazi troops and their Hungarian fascist allies staged a last, doomed stand in the surrounding area against the advancing Soviet Red Army.

Renovated after the war, Carmelita again became a theater but was taken over by Mr. Orban's government in 2014. After years of yet more renovation, Mr. Orban moved his office from Parliament into a second floor office suite in 2019.

Akos Kovacs, an employee at the state property agency now responsible for Carmelita, said "nobody really knew or cared about this building until Mr. Orban moved in." After that, he said, "it became burdened by politics. Now everyone is interested."

Janos Arva contributed reporting.

At 77, a terrifying walk to escape 'hell' in eastern Ukraine

SLOVIANSK, UKRAINE

Under drone-filled skies, Nina Ivanova sneaked away from burning city

BY CASSANDRA VINOGRAD AND OLEKSANDR CHUBKO

Stay, or try to escape? Nina Ivanova, 77, felt the odds of survival were 50/50 either way, and she had nothing left to lose.

Russian forces were just over a mile away (1.6 kilometers), battering her city, Lyman, in eastern Ukraine, with glide bombs and drones. Her husband was dead after a long illness, and her home was destroyed. She was hiding in a basement with her two daughters.

Lyman was burning, but civilian and military evacuation teams no longer entered the city, given the danger. The only way out was on foot — nine miles under drone-filled skies.

When Ms. Ivanova saw a body eaten by dogs in Lyman, it helped push her to her limit, she said. She and her daughters would take their chances on the road, as countless Ukrainians have done before them all along the front line.

"We got up and left," she said.

LIVING IN LYMAN

Ms. Ivanova and her husband, Borys, lived in Lyman for decades. They raised their children there, in a house on Michurina Street.

The city, which had a prewar population of 20,000, served as a rail hub for the Donbas region. When Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022, seizing the Donbas was a central aim, and that made Lyman a prime target.

Russian forces fought their way through dense forests and fields surrounding Lyman and seized the city in May 2022. Ukrainian troops drove them out five months later. But Lyman was never fully free of Russian fire.

Over time, Moscow's small advances toward the city began to add up, and strikes on Lyman started intensifying again last fall. That's when humanitarian aid deliveries stopped.

Ms. Ivanova's home was hit in a strike on Dec. 17. The roof collapsed, and the windows were blown out. Two days later, her living room was smashed in a second strike.

Her family, though, was safe. They were sheltering in the basement of a five-story building with neighbors. They slept under three blankets, wearing jackets and hats, in temperatures below zero Fahrenheit (minus 18 Celsius), and they cooked stockpiled food aid on bricks over an open fire.

Mr. Ivanov, 79, who had been bedridden for eight years, died on Jan. 12. The Ivanova women buried him in the yard. Things only got worse. One man who was living in their basement died in a strike on March 14. Another was killed the next day, while digging a grave for the first.

That left seven people in the underground shelter: The Ivanovas, a friend named Tetyana Shmarko and a family of three.

The Ivanova women stayed as Russian troops intensified attacks through March and April and into May. They stayed even as their supplies dwindled, even as others took their chances fleeing the city on foot and even as the mayor implored them to do the same.

Then, on May 23, Ms. Ivanova said, they realized that they simply could not sit in that basement any longer. Their patience and nerves had run out.

GETTING OUT

Their initial attempt to walk to safety ended in failure. The Ivanovas and Ms. Shmarko made it to a forest but could not enter — too many craters and downed trees. After three hours of wandering, they knew that the morning's shelling would soon start. They made the gut-wrenching decision to go back.

VIA THE IVANOVA FAMILY

Right, Nina Ivanova at an evacuation center in Sloviansk, Ukraine. For months, she and her two daughters had been sheltering in a basement in Lyman, left.

"I was walking down the road like a drunk — couldn't stand on my feet, swaying and falling."

After returning, exhausted and despondent, they called the mayor and said that they were resigned to their fate. He said they should rest for a few days but must go again. They repacked bags that had weighed them down on the initial try, taking out tracksuits and cutting 10 pairs of underwear and socks down to five.

Two days after the aborted escape, and after a night that Ms. Ivanova spent in prayer, too anxious to sleep or eat, she and her daughters, Olha, 54, and Tetyana, 53, prepared to leave at 3:40 a.m., when fewer drones tend to be in the air. They wore comfortable sneakers but paid no heed to layers. Walking and fear would keep them warm.

They were joined by Ms. Shmarko and the other family from the basement — a couple and their wounded 31-year-old son. The group balanced backpacks and a pair of cats on two bicycles, then started walking.

This time, they took a different route — a longer circle road — on the mayor's advice. They passed destroyed buildings. They passed the railway, its tracks torn apart, then the burned forest. They passed the shells of military vehicles and saw shreds of torn uniforms on a crater-marked highway.

They pressed on, too scared to pause even for a sip of water. Drones were flying, and shelling would usually start after 7 a.m.

CASSANDRA VINOGRAD/THE NEW YORK TIMES

The other family struggled to keep up. The son, with two pieces of shrapnel in his back from an earlier Russian strike, could not walk fast.

But the Ivanovas and Ms. Shmarko kept going, and praying.

Anti-drone netting over the road offered little comfort. The destroyed civilian and military cars underneath illustrated the scant protection. They knew others from Lyman who had been killed while walking this stretch.

Ms. Ivanova was exhausted. "I was walking down the road like a drunk — couldn't stand on my feet, swaying and falling," she recalled.

After four hours and 20 minutes, the Siverskyi Donets River was in sight. Ms. Ivanova's daughter Tetyana, who had fished there as a child, ran ahead to find the crossing and called out.

Ukrainian soldiers emerged from bushes on the riverbank. The mayor had told them to expect the Ivanovas. The soldiers offered the women water and told them to hide in the shrubs.

The bags and the cats were loaded into a small wooden boat that was pulled across the dark green water via ropes that have been used throughout the war to ferry soldiers and supplies. The women would go next — two at a time, wearing bulletproof vests.

Seeing the shrapnel-scarred boat that would carry her left Ms. Ivanova "so scared," she said. Had she known what crossing the river would entail, she later told her daughters, she would have refused the journey and "laid down there with my old mum, buried in the yard."

Soldiers tried to ease her fears, joking and promising delivery "in comfort."

When they made it to the other side, the Ivanovas clambered up the steep riverbank through the mud. "You have no idea what we looked like," Ms. Ivanova said with a laugh.

More soldiers greeted them there, loading the women onto ATVs with instructions to "hold tight."

ON TO SAFETY

The ATVs sped through a forest, onto the highway and to waiting military vehicles that took the women to an evacuation hub in Sloviansk, where we met them. They arrived at around 10 a.m., still covered in mud.

Tetyana Ivanova called an aunt.

"We walked out on foot today, walked 15 kilometers!" she exclaimed. There were other updates after months in a basement with no phone signal. "My father died; we buried him," she said.

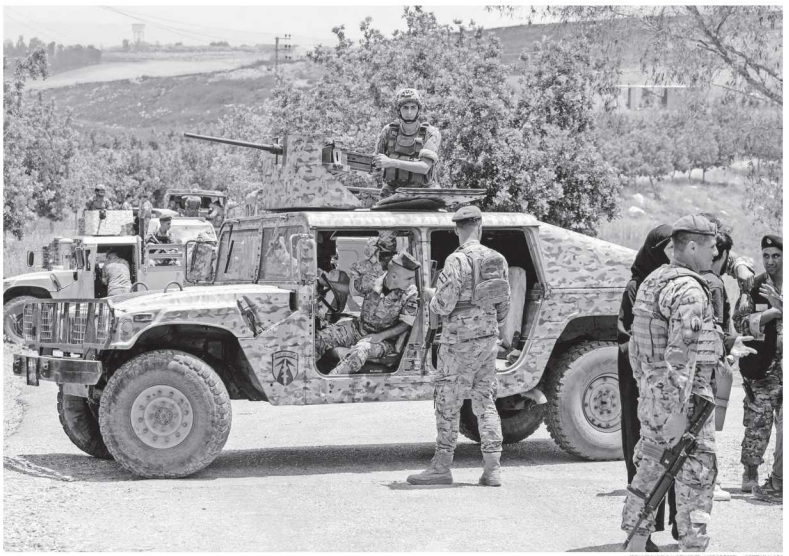
Humanitarian workers brought the women lunch, but they could not eat.

"We are in shock," Ms. Ivanova explained.

She insisted that she felt fine after the walk. Swollen ankles suggested otherwise. Still, sore feet were no matter at this point.

"We escaped from hell," Ms. Ivanova said. "We took a 50/50 chance, as they say — whether they kill us there, or on the road," she added. "Fifty-fifty — nothing to lose."

WORLD



IBRAHIM AMRO/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE — GETTY IMAGES

Lebanese soldiers in July. Lebanon spent much of last year chipping away at Hezbollah's sway, but the militant group dragged the country into war when it fired on Israel in March.

After hope of talks, stuck again

NEWS ANALYSIS
BEIRUT, LEBANON

Lebanon's efforts to tame Hezbollah stall amid the group's war with Israel

BY CHRISTINA GOLDBAUM

When Lebanese and Israeli officials sat down in April for their first direct talks in decades, Lebanon's leaders called it a breakthrough: a chance, finally, to reclaim some control over the country's fate after Hezbollah had dragged it into yet another war with Israel.

But four months and seven rounds of negotiations later, there is little to show for it. The standstill is a blow to Lebanon's president, Joseph Aoun, who took office last year with a popular mandate to wrest power from Hezbollah.

Mr. Aoun, elected by Lebanese lawmakers, pledged to restore the state's monopoly on arms and curtail Hezbollah's political sway. The government he formed spent much of last year making headway on that promise, working to strip Hezbollah's influence from the country's international airport, the commercial port in Beirut and the banks, all used to smuggle in weapons and cash.

When Hezbollah fired on Israel in March in solidarity with Iran, setting off another all-out war, the shortcomings of the efforts to bring the group to heel were laid bare. However much the Lebanese state had chipped away at Hezbollah's influence, the group could still drag the country into war.

Israel insists that its forces will remain in the large swath of southern Lebanon seized in this war until Hezbollah is disarmed. On Saturday, Lebanon's National News Agency reported a series of Israeli airstrikes and demolitions overnight and into the morning in towns and villages around the south. Israeli forces have carried out demolitions and strikes nearly daily for about four months in areas they occupy.

Lebanon and Hezbollah have each tried to show who can best end the war and roll back Israel's new occupation.

Hezbollah has denounced the talks, saying it will not consider surrendering its weapons until Israeli forces withdraw from Lebanese territory. And while Lebanese officials say they want to eliminate Hezbollah's military might, the government has little ability, if any, to actually do so.

Now, after the latest round of Israeli-Lebanese talks sputtered to a close this month, there is a growing consensus that diplomacy has reached a deadlock and that the Lebanese state is back to where it has been for decades: stuck.

"They are at complete loggerheads," said Paul Salem, a nonresident senior associate with the Center for Strategic and International Studies. "It's not a dead end, but it's in a stalemate right now."

For decades, Hezbollah had an iron grip on the Lebanese state. With an arsenal far greater than that of the Lebanese Army and a loyal support base among Lebanon's Shiite Muslim community, the Iran-backed militant group served as the ultimate arbiter of power in a country whose government has been long crippled by dysfunction, corruption and political paralysis.

But after Hezbollah's previous war with Israel ended in a cease-fire in November 2024, the group appeared battered and the country seemed exhausted. For the first time in decades, there was a groundswell of public support for reclaiming power from Hezbollah.

In the months since all-out war resumed in March, Hezbollah and the government have each sought to demonstrate that they alone really hold power in Lebanon. Each, in its own way, has tried to show who can best end the war and roll back Israel's new occupation.

In June, the United States and Iran signed a preliminary deal to suspend their conflict, and that also included a halt to fighting in Lebanon. It was evidence, Hezbollah argued, that only its patron, Iran, could bring the war in Lebanon to an end.

The Lebanese government has since sought to demonstrate it plays the leading role, embarking on direct talks with Israeli officials. Given the countries' long history of animosity — neither had ever formally recognized the other's sovereignty — analysts say the meetings themselves marked a step forward.

"That the talks exist, that the Lebanese state and Israeli state said we want to and will continue to talk directly to each other, that's an important thing to have in the regional toolbox," Mr. Salem said.

The talks led the two sides to agree in principle to a phased arrangement: Israel would withdraw from pockets of southern Lebanon as the Lebanese Army moved in to secure the areas and keep Hezbollah out of them. But the initial rollout has slowed in recent weeks, with Israel refusing to expand the program further and arguing that the Lebanese Army's efforts have fallen short.

That has left southern Lebanon trapped in the same conflict it has been stuck in for months. Israeli forces have continued to demolish buildings and infrastructure in the villages they now occupy. Hezbollah has continued to fire on Israeli forces in Lebanese territory. And hundreds of thousands of Lebanese are still displaced from their homes.

"People want to move past this chapter with so many conflicts with Israel, conflicts that are seen as serving an outside agenda and not the Lebanese' interests," said Mohanad Hage Ali, a senior fellow at the Carnegie Middle East Center in Beirut. "But now talks have stalled, people are waiting. There was a window of opportunity that people fear is closing."

Pandemic clues in South America

PANDEMIC, FROM PAGE 1

A warming climate and land-use changes are already having an affect globally on well-known diseases like dengue, Chikungunya and yellow fever, which are carried by mosquitoes and have spread into new countries and regions in recent years.

Dengue, a flulike illness that can be fatal, is one of the fastest-growing infectious diseases in parts of South America, and scientists have linked its growth to environmental degradation and a warming planet. More than 10 million cases, and over 16,000 related deaths, have been reported to the World Health Organization since the beginning of 2024, with some estimates putting the number of cases far higher.

Scientists have also linked climate change to the spread of the Andes virus, a rare but dangerous hantavirus — another type of rodent-borne pathogen present in South America — that was linked to three deaths on a cruise ship earlier this year. That outbreak tested the nerves of a pandemic-weary world and spotlighted the kind of growing viral spillover risks that researchers like Dr. Kulkarni have been examining.

Increasingly, scientists are also tracking diseases like A.H.F. that have emerged or surged back from relative obscurity.

Dr. Marcela Uhart, an Argentine veterinarian and researcher with U.C. Davis, remembers when A.H.F. was a widespread problem in her country during the 1970s and '80s. Dr. Uhart's parents had friends who died of the disease, and she grew up hearing radio advertisements asking survivors for blood plasma donations.

The rollout of a vaccine helped bring case numbers down in the 1990s. And plasma treatments proved effective, bringing the fatality rate from as high as 30 percent down to 1 percent for patients who received prompt care. Outbreaks dwindled.

But a few years ago, Dr. Uhart noticed the numbers rising.

"It was like, 'Whoa, how is that happening?'" she said.

Cases weren't just rising, they were cropping up in unexpected areas and infecting new types of people. After a truck driver tested positive in 2025, health officials took note.

"This used to be an illness of rural workers — it didn't exist in cities," said Dr. María Dolores Lucena, who has seen a recent increase in cases San Nicolás de los Arroyos, a growing port city outside of Rosario. "Now there are people who get infected without any such link, people who have never even left the city."

Dr. Lucena said the increase in local cases was likely tied to the city's expansion. Over the years, she has watched San Nicolás de los Arroyos stretch toward the port and along the river, with gated communities popping up near fields in formerly rural areas.

Similar transformations have happened across Argentina, leading researchers to wonder whether land-use changes and climate shifts are driving the spread of disease.

Dr. Kulkarni, Dr. Uhart and other scientists investigated that hypothesis in several recent studies. In April, the researchers built models to predict the risk to humans from the movements of the rodents that carry South American arenaviruses, a class of viruses that are typically spread by rats and mice.

About three-quarters of emerging infectious diseases in humans come from animals.

Shifts in temperature, precipitation and seasonal weather patterns have made some regions less suitable for the rodents, while others became new potential hot spots, they found.

Unlike more transmissible diseases, such as Covid-19, many hantaviruses and arenaviruses in South America don't spread easily between people. But researchers who study A.H.F. and its relatives hope to boost understanding of other pathogens that could pose international risks.

With the certainty of rising temperatures and other environmental factors that could cause diseases to proliferate, Dr. Uhart said health officials should try to get one step ahead of outbreaks — with the help of climate modeling — instead of responding once new cases have already appeared.

"We try to turn off the fire once it already is burning," Dr. Uhart said. "Can you really predict the next emerging disease? You really can't. But you can predict or understand better the risk factors."

SEBASTIÁN LÓPEZ BRACH FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Dr. Matías Lahitte, an Argentine infectious disease specialist, said it was "remarkable" that a rise in cases of Argentine hemorrhagic fever was not being discussed more.

Trump's Iran threat seen as unlikely to ruffle China

NEWS ANALYSIS
HONG KONG

Analysts believe Beijing can withstand loss of oil and inflict pain on U.S.

BY DAVID PIERSON AND BERRY WANG

As Iran's largest trading partner, China would seemingly have much to lose from President Trump's threat to impose "tremendous economic consequences" on nations doing business with Tehran.

For decades, China has defied Western sanctions on Iranian oil by buying up to 90 percent of Tehran's oil exports. China has also supplied Iran with technology and raw materials to build an arsenal of missiles and drones.

But Beijing has reasons to feel confident it can withstand Mr. Trump's latest warning — if it is ever fulfilled. And increasingly, Chinese analysts see the war in Iran, which the White House seems unable to end on favorable terms, as a sign of America's mounting weakness.

"This threat reveals how desperate the Trump administration has become on the issue of Iran," said Wu Xinbo, a leading American studies scholar at Fudan University in Shanghai, who advises China's foreign ministry.

"They issue this threat, not because they think it is workable, but because they have no other options," he said, to get out of this "self-created dilemma."

In a social media post on Wednesday, Mr. Trump vowed to inflict an "economic D-Day" on Iran, as well as to punish countries that "provide any type of lifeline" to the country. On Thursday, Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent implied that it was in China's best interest to cooperate.

But China might be feeling emboldened as the United States withdraws military assets in the Pacific that were largely meant to project power in Asia. Most recently, that included moving the aircraft carrier George Washington out of the region to support operations in the Middle East.

Lin Jian, a spokesman for China's foreign ministry, said on Friday that China opposed unilateral sanctions and that pressure would not resolve the crisis in Iran.

One major reason that pressure may backfire against the United States is that China is equipped to cut the supply of critical minerals to American companies, including makers of U.S. weapons, which have been depleted because of the war.

China demonstrated the power of this chokehold when it forced Mr. Trump to pause a blistering trade war last year by cutting off its critical minerals exports. That détente has largely held.

The threat of economic consequences now raises questions about the durability of that truce, a month before Mr. Trump is scheduled to host China's top leader, Xi Jinping, for his first state visit to Washington since 2015.

Mr. Trump and Mr. Xi last met in Beijing in May, in a summit that China interpreted as highly successful. Mr. Trump did not challenge Mr. Xi on divisive issues and he was effusive in his praise, calling Mr. Xi a "great leader."

"I doubt either side wants Iran to derail Xi Jinping's upcoming visit to the United States. President Trump has clearly attached considerable importance to his relationship with Xi and to the visit itself," said Wang Zichen, a foreign-policy analyst at the Center for China and Globalization, a research institute in Beijing.

Mr. Trump's threats could also just be bluster, Mr. Wang said.

"There is by now a considerable credibility discount attached to individual statements by President Trump on Iran," Mr. Wang said.

Regardless of Mr. Trump's warnings, China's interests in the Middle East are nuanced. Tehran is Beijing's closest strategic partner in the region and a fellow authoritarian regime that wants to weaken U.S. global power. At the same time, China has deepened ties with some of Iran's rivals, such as Saudi Arabia, which could provide greater economic opportunities than Tehran.

It is unclear how the Trump administration would pressure China to cut its business ties with Iran. Mr. Bessent said he would hold a news briefing on Monday to provide more details.

Washington could try to interrupt the flow of Iranian oil to China, which often goes through small, independent Chinese refineries, known as teapots.

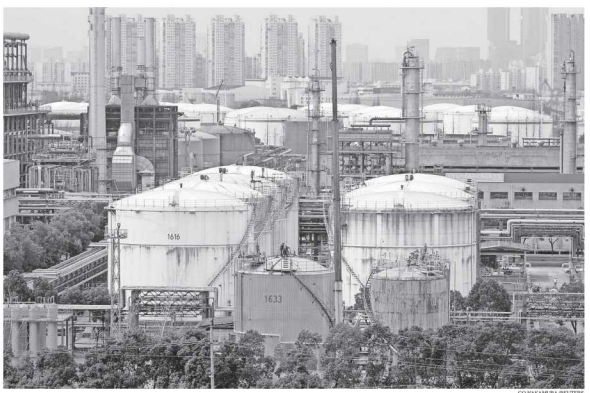
Those refineries are less exposed to American sanctions because they are usually disconnected from the global financial system. The United States could try to step up interdiction of the ships that carry Iranian oil to Chinese refineries, or it could increase its scrutiny of banks that help Iran launder the Chinese currency that it receives from the teapots as payment.

China has also stockpiled months worth of oil and increased its purchases of oil from Russia to account for reduced oil flows through the Strait of Hormuz.

Cutting China's access to discounted Iranian oil could also force Beijing to buy more oil elsewhere, which would probably raise global oil prices.

"The United States is not a paper tiger," said Diao Daming, a professor of international relations at Renmin University of China in Beijing. "It can bite and cause bleeding."

But, he added, "it will also harm itself, which does not serve the interests of either country."



GO NAKAMURA/REUTERS

Oil storage in Shanghai. China has stockpiled months worth of oil to account for reduced oil flows through the Strait of Hormuz.

CORRECTIONS

• An article on Wednesday about the drying of Lake Powell and Lake Mead, the United States' largest reservoirs, misstated the location of the Flaming Gorge reservoir. It is on the Wyoming-Utah border, not the Wyoming-Colorado border.

• An article on Aug. 4 about the blues singer Ma Rainey misidentified the tracks on which violin could be heard in a new boxed set of recordings. They are "Bo-Weavil Blues" and "Those All Night Long Blues," not "Little Low Mama Blues" and "Grievin' Heart Blues."

It also misquoted David Sager's remarks on questions about Rainey's sexuality and rumors about her relationships with women by rendering separate comments as a single thought.

Surprising opponents of online gun sales

WASHINGTON

Small dealers argue plan could risk safety and disrupt industry

BY AISHVARYA KAVI

ZACK WITTMAN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Colin Overbey, manager for Dunn's Attic in Ormond Beach, Fla., is one of hundreds of people lobbying the U.S. firearms regulator to halt proposals that could alter the gun industry.

The pleas came in droves.

For mom-and-pop shops in the United States, the Trump administration's push to loosen firearms restrictions is welcome in nearly all respects but one: allowing guns to be sold entirely online.

Two proposals paving the way for the move have exposed unlikely fault lines, as independently owned brick-and-mortar stores urge the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, which sets federal gun regulations, to rethink the plan. They warn that together, the changes — letting guns be shipped directly to buyers and allowing for remote background checks — would compromise their livelihoods by favoring big retailers and come at the expense of public safety.

"At best, this is a wealth transfer to large corporations," Colin Overbey, the manager of a small business in Ormond Beach, Fla., that sells guns, wrote during the public comment period for the rule changes. "At worst it is just asking for problems that presently don't exist."

In its analysis, the A.T.F. said the regulation would come at no cost to the roughly 45,000 federally licensed gun dealers, most of which are small businesses, the agency noted. Instead, the bureau argued, it would benefit the dealers, "because it would allow all of them to potentially capitalize on a larger statewide market by allowing online sales."

The firearms bureau did not respond to questions about the backlash. But the agency said it was committed to reviewing the public's feedback before completing the proposed regulations.

Mr. Overbey is one of hundreds of people lobbying the A.T.F. to halt proposals that could transform the gun industry. The administration has said the changes are part of a broader effort to modernize how the government regulates firearms, easing burdens on gun dealers and owners. More than 13 million gun sales each year could move online if the buyers adjust how they shop, according to an estimate from the agency.

In an interview, Lee Kinnard, who has owned Dominion Firearms in Miami, Ariz., for almost a decade, said he and other small dealers feared that opening the industry to direct online sales would enable a few big companies to swoop in and dominate the market. That includes GrabAGun, a retailer based in Texas for which Donald Trump Jr. serves as a director and holds about 1 percent of shares. The company, whose stock value has more than halved since it went public last year, has banked its business model on the shift, billing itself as "an Amazon of guns."

But Mr. Overbey, like other small firearms dealers interviewed for this article, expressed worry that letting businesses conduct background checks by video would make it harder to spot red flags. There is a "safety concern of someone either trying to buy for someone else or someone that's buying for themselves that really shouldn't have a gun," Mr. Overbey added.

The window for public feedback to the rules closed at the beginning of the month, leaving the agency to decide whether and how to move forward with the policy.

Under federal law, gun sales can already take place online. But in most of those cases, a customer must pick up the firearm at a physical store, and only after initiating a background check in person.

The new proposals would eliminate those requirements, allowing for guns to be shipped directly to the buyer after verifying his or her identity by video. Such a change, critics say, would remove critical safeguards that have required dealers and buyers to complete the transaction in person.

The A.T.F. advises dealers on how to spot straw purchasers, or people buying a firearm on behalf of someone else, and on other signs of a person who should not be in possession of a firearm. It is a responsibility that gun dealers say they take seriously, and one that small businesses warn would evaporate, should the administration follow through with its proposals.

Mr. Overbey, the business manager of a shop named Dunn's Attic, mentioned a series of occasions when he turned down purchases after observing shoppers in person: a father accompanying a son too young to legally buy a firearm; a woman buying a gun that her boyfriend appeared to select for himself; and a young adult who seemed uncomfortable and struggled to make eye contact.

"My license premises is within a school zone," Mr. Overbey said. "I am roughly 200 yards from a day care and about 500 from a school. I don't play games." (Two hundred yards is about 180 meters.)

In a notable departure from its general support of the Trump administration's push to roll back limits on guns, the National Shooting Sports Foundation, the firearms industry's trade association, told the A.T.F. that it opposed the proposal based on "public safety implications," including concerns that online transactions could be "exploited by bad actors."

Lawrence G. Keane, the group's senior vice president, said in an interview that based on more than 1,000 responses to a survey circulated to members in July, the foundation was "overwhelmingly opposed" to the shift.

"This issue of brick and mortar not liking the internet is not a new thing — it goes back many, many years, and it divides segments of the industry," Mr. Keane said. "But from N.S.S.F's point of view, we thought what was important was to point out public safety potential consequences by not having in-person transactions."

Some dealers who support the administration's effort say that it simply brings gun sales into the modern era, echoing many gun rights groups, manufacturers and retail companies.

Andrew Zeller, who runs the concierge gun business Precision Turn Key Solutions from his home in Grand Rapids, Mich., favors the rule change. Remote sales, he wrote in, commenting on the rule, would open up "far greater opportunities," because some of his clients cannot or do not want to travel to his home.

"I think it's just trying to streamline and make the overall process more efficient," Mr. Zeller said in an interview.

Marianna Mitchem, a former A.T.F. official who led the division that inspects federally licensed gun dealers, warned that sellers were effectively the first line of defense. Under federal law, she added, the agency had no way to question a purchase, once it had been completed, short of opening a criminal investigation.

Ms. Mitchem is now an adviser to Everytown for Gun Safety, a nonprofit advocacy group founded by Michael R. Bloomberg, the former mayor of New York. The group scraped more than 3,500 comments in response to the A.T.F.'s proposed regulation, or about 80 percent of the total number, and analyzed them using artificial intelligence.

It found that a majority of the commenters were opposed to the change and that many of those who identified as members of the firearms industry cited fears of market consolidation.

The New York Times corroborated the analysis by using an A.I. model to determine the level of support for the proposal. The public comments are not a scientific poll and may not reflect the views of Americans broadly.

Among the large corporations that some businesses say could outpace them is GrabAGun, a retailer that is more than a decade old.

While a dealer would have to be registered in the same state as interested buyers to make a remote sale under the proposed regulations, big chains and online retailers are among those with the resources to do so.

A company for which Donald Trump Jr. serves as a director has based its business model on the change.

On an earnings call in May, shortly after the administration proposed allowing direct online sales, Marc Nemati, the chief executive of GrabAGun, assured investors that the company was "uniquely positioned for this opportunity." GrabAGun is for now only licensed to sell guns in Texas, but can ship to dealers across the United States.

Asked for comment, GrabAGun said that the new background check requirements for online purchases would be sufficiently rigorous.

Across the country, small businesses are bracing for a hit.

Elizabeth Roncali runs Serenity Safe Shot from her home in Ironwood, a remote city on Michigan's Upper Peninsula. She earns most of her revenue from transferring firearms to people shopping online, acting as the intermediary.

In an interview, Ms. Roncali said that if local dealers were eliminated from the equation, she would lose the $25 fee she charges for transfers, a small profit that is also only a small saving for a buyer who might opt to have a gun shipped straight to his or her door.

If her shop closes, her community will lose her as a resource, she said. As a veteran who deployed in Iraq and grew up around firearms, she reminds buyers about safely storing weapons, a topic she takes particularly seriously after losing a cousin and a sister to suicide.

Mr. Kinnard, a retired police officer, said that at his Arizona store, he often sold firearms to first-time gun owners.

"I've made handouts for gun safety that I give them, and I go over it with them," Mr. Kinnard said. "I hate sending people out that don't know what they're doing. They want to start, but they really don't have any idea of the gun safety part of it."

Dylan Freedman contributed reporting.

President installs watchdogs eager to follow his lead

WASHINGTON

Inspectors general, meant for independent oversight, exhibit a different mission

BY LUKE BROADWATER

MARIAM ZUHAIB/ASSOCIATED PRESS

ANDREW LEVIN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

ERIN SCHAFF/THE NEW YORK TIMES

President Trump has installed an ally, Anthony D'Esposito, above left, as inspector general for the Labor Department. Democrats have been asking for a nonpartisan investigation into the botched repairs at the Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool, above center. Mark Greenblatt, above right, was among the inspectors general fired by Mr. Trump last year.

One federal inspector general, a former Republican congressman, has spent recent weeks lavishing praise on President Trump while attacking a rival of the president, Gov. Gavin Newsom, Democrat of California.

Another inspector general appointed by Mr. Trump has recently singled out Attorney General Letitia James of New York, one of the president's most hated targets, as the Trump administration withheld funds for her state.

And Mr. Trump has inserted a right-wing operative — a co-author of the conservative Project 2025 document — to take over the inspector general's office that would be in charge of any internal investigation into his botched repairs of the Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool.

During the first year of Mr. Trump's second term, his approach to dealing with federal inspectors general, who are supposed to be apolitical, was to fire them and slash funding for their offices. But since the mass firings, the president has appointed some government watchdogs with overtly political backgrounds. And they have directed their investigations toward allegations of fraud at the state level, instead of targeting the agencies within the administration that they are supposed to scrutinize.

"The president wanted his own I.G.s," said Michael J. Missal, who spent nine years as inspector general for the Department of Veterans Affairs. "When you have your own I.G.s, you lose the credibility and integrity of the work. If people think that you're doing it to support the administration, then the whole concept that was created in 1978 of independent, nonpartisan inspectors general goes away."

Taylor Rogers, a White House spokeswoman, said Mr. Trump had hired "highly qualified and accomplished individuals" who would carry out his mission of targeting fraud.

The latest example of Mr. Trump's inserting a political actor into a nonpartisan watchdog role occurred amid public furor over the Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool fiasco.

Alarmed over the Trump administration's work on the Reflecting Pool and the president's attempt to falsely blame the failures on left-wing vandals, Democratic lawmakers urged the Interior Department's inspector general to investigate.

The Trump administration's response was to insert a right-wing operative, Dennis Kirk, to take over the office that would carry out the investigation.

Mr. Kirk was among the authors of Project 2025, a collection of conservative policy proposals published before the 2024 election. The plan to install Mr. Kirk as the Interior Department inspector general sounded alarm bells in the world of government watchdogs among Democrats on Capitol Hill, and not merely because he could thwart an internal investigation into the Reflecting Pool.

Through a spokesman, Mr. Kirk declined to comment. The White House voiced support for Mr. Kirk in a statement.

Mr. Missal was one of at least 20 inspectors general who were fired or demoted by Mr. Trump in the first six months of the president's second term. The mass purge, which was accompanied by staff reductions of up to 30 percent in some offices, resulted in inspectors general offices without permanent leaders and a culture of fear that workers could be fired for doing their jobs.

But now, as Mr. Trump fills some of the positions, he has selected people with political backgrounds, and they have made it the mission of their organizations to look outside the Trump administration for fraud and wrongdoing.

Inspectors general, by law, are tasked with preventing and detecting fraud, waste and abuse related to their agency, while promoting efficiency in agency programs and operations. While they are inside respective federal agencies, they are designed to act independently and in a nonpartisan manner. About half of federal inspectors general are subject to Senate confirmation.

Anthony D'Esposito is a former Republican congressman whom Mr. Trump named inspector general for the Labor Department. But, instead of scrutinizing his own agency, he has said publicly that he is working "side by side" with the administrator of the department to find fraud in the states.

In a series of recent social media posts and public appearances, Mr. D'Esposito has heaped praise on Mr. Trump and attacked his political rivals, such as Mr. Newsom. He also gave a speech this month at one of Mr. Trump's events on Long Island in New York State meant for rallying support for Republican candidates in the area.

"I have no problem with them going after fraud. I want them to go after fraud," said Mark Greenblatt, who was the inspector general for the Interior

"Not supposed to be a cheerleader for the administration."

Department before Mr. Trump fired him last year. "It's a question of whether the I.G. is part of that effort; they are taking themselves out of their role of overseeing the department."

As for Mr. D'Esposito's exuberant praise of the president, Mr. Greenblatt said: "It's just unimaginable that an I.G. would write like that. You're not supposed to be a cheerleader for the administration."

Thomas March Bell, a lawyer who worked for Capitol Hill Republicans before Mr. Trump installed him as the inspector general for the Department of Health and Human Services, has gone after Ms. James, one of Mr. Trump's biggest rivals. The administration suspended millions of dollars in funding for New York after Mr. Bell accused the state of being weak on fraud.

Some watchdogs have still shown signs of independence. The inspector general for the Department of Homeland Security clashed with the department's former secretary Kristi Noem, for instance, over allegations that she and her deputies had "systematically obstructed" his work.

But there is evidence that the firings and staff reductions have impeded the work of inspectors generals.

Inspectors general assigned to cabinet-level agencies issued 15 percent fewer audits and 25 percent fewer investigative reports in the first half of fiscal year 2026 compared with the average of the past five years, according to research conducted by the Partnership for Public Service, a nonprofit that works on civil service issues. Five departments issued at least 30 percent fewer audit reports, and five issued at least 30 percent fewer investigative reports.

"The offices with the largest staffing cuts were also the ones with the largest declines in investigative reports," said Chris Piper, a senior manager with the group.

Still, within the inspector general community, the nomination of Mr. Kirk is considered a pivot beyond merely cutting those agencies. Now, former inspectors general say, they are being politicized.

Mr. Kirk was a former adviser to Tulsi Gabbard when she served as the director of national intelligence, and a staff member at the conservative Heritage Foundation.

The Trump administration's efforts to rush through repairs to the Reflecting Pool ended in a debacle this year. Under Secretary Doug Burgum, the Interior Department approved no-bid contracts for vendors, citing tight deadlines, in an effort to bypass scrutiny of the renovations, according to a New York Times investigation.

A hastily installed blue lining on the pool began to peel, and new water-purification systems failed to prevent a bloom of algae that turned the pool green.

The president blamed vandals, but the Justice Department dropped charges against one defendant, telling the court that the contractor was to blame for the problems.

Now Democrats fear that no real investigation will be conducted.

"This is in some ways unsurprising because this was all right in Project 2025," says Representative Jared Huffman of California, the highest-ranking Democrat on the House Natural Resources Committee who was among the Democrats calling for an investigation. "They laid out the purge of the civil service and the consolidation of these independent entities within the government under executive power, under direct executive power, and then they called for a second step, which was to repopulate all these positions with Heritage-trained political stooges."

Mr. Huffman noted that in past administrations, including during Mr. Trump's first term, inspectors general were responsive to requests from lawmakers. But if partisans occupy the roles instead of career professionals, that could change.

"It means the purpose is upended totally," he said. "You're not getting a meaningful, independent review of government waste, fraud and abuse. You're getting another politically weaponized tool for Donald Trump."

WORLD

One more trip for a bus that drove the counterculture

PLEASANT HILL, ORE.

Colorful time in history recalled as famous vehicle returns to San Francisco

BY HEATHER KNIGHT

The school bus sat inside a big barn down a winding gravel path among the rolling hills outside Eugene, Ore. Built in 1939, its once-blazing colors have faded. Its roof is crumbling. Its windows are cracked.

It might look like a hunk of junk, but the muted technicolor splotches tell the story of one of the most exuberant periods of San Francisco history.

Sixty years ago, this bus symbolized the city's counterculture revolution, the embrace of psychedelic drugs and the live-out-loud, love-your-neighbor ethos for which the era is remembered.

With the United States once again facing war, polarized politics and cultural battles, Zane Kesey thinks some of that old bus magic is needed. And that is why he agreed to send the bus, the one he helped cover in swirls of Day-Glo paint when he was 3, back to the city that spawned a movement.

"I would love to see it adored again," he said. "And for people to feel that pure, innocent love that came out of it."

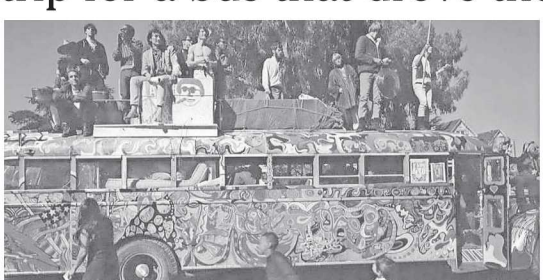
His father, Ken Kesey, who died in 2001, had just written the novel "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest" when he purchased the former school bus that a large Bay Area family had tricked out with beds, benches and a refrigerator for road trips. Mr. Kesey and his free-thinking friends, called the Merry Pranksters, painted the bus in psychedelic colors, cut a sun roof into it, added a powerful sound system and installed a balcony on top.

A sign on the back read, "Caution: Weird Load." Above the windshield, where a bus typically displays its destination, somebody painted the misspelled word, "Furthur." And the name for the bus stuck.

The pranksters set out on a cross-country trip, smoking weed, tripping on LSD and spreading the gospel of opening your mind, man.

The journey was documented in Tom Wolfe's 1968 book, "The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test," hailed by The New York Times back then as not only "the best book on the hippies," but also "essential." The bus and its beatnik driver, Neal Cassady, appeared in the Grateful Dead song "The Other One," which references "Cowboy Neal at the wheel of the bus to never-ever land."

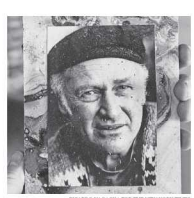
The bus became part of the landscape of San Francisco's counterculture movement. In 1967, Mr. Kesey drove it into Golden Gate Park for the Human Be-In, a gathering to protest a California law banning LSD. The event was a precursor to the city's Summer of Love later that year, during which tens of thousands of young, idealistic people poured into the city's Haight-Ashbury neighborhood and the park to protest the Vietnam War and promote hallucinogenic drugs and free love.



VIA THE KESEY FAMILY

RICARDO NAGAOKA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

RICARDO NAGAOKA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES



RICARDO NAGAOKA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Ken Kesey, above, and his friends traveled cross-country on the bus, left, smoking weed, tripping on LSD and spreading the gospel of opening your mind. The trip was documented in Tom Wolfe's 1968 book, "The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test." Below left, the interior of the bus today, and bottom, with a replica built in the 1990s.

Those days are long gone, and San Francisco is now known more for A.I. than LSD, more for billionaires than beatniks. But Zane Kesey aims to bring some of that old flavor back — with his dad's bus.

Earlier this month, it left the Kesey family farm in Pleasant Hill, Ore., a short drive from Eugene, for the first time since 1969, and arrived at the Hall of Flowers in San Francisco's Golden Gate Park. There, starting Sept. 5, the bus will be on display as part of a show called "Forever Grateful, Golden Gate Park," put on by the Haight Street Art Center, which aims to preserve and showcase art and cultural artifacts from the city's counterculture movement. The exhibit will also feature Jerry Garcia's BMW, live performers, puppetry and storytelling.

Kelly Harris, the center's executive director, visited the farm before the bus left and said that while it looked like a relic, it still exuded an energy that was "magical and connective."

Roger McNamee, the chairman of the center's board, called the bus "the Rosetta stone of San Francisco's counterculture" and said he hoped that those who view it, including young people who have never heard of it, see parallels to today.

"There is this expectation that we will live in a world dominated by technology, dominated by capital, where everyone is expected to play their role and have very little control over their own futures," he said in an interview, noting Mr. Kesey and his pranksters had decided not to conform and instead forged their own wild, joyful path.

"If everybody went and sat with this bus for a bit and thought about what it meant, I think they'd be happier," Mr. McNamee said.

Zane Kesey, 65, sure hopes so. He is the kind of man who offers hugs to strangers, wears tie-dyed shirts and talks about the bus as if it were a person with feelings.

"She's happy, you can tell," he said, noting that the crescent-moon-shaped silver bumper, which was restored to its front for the journey to California, resembles a smile. "She's thrilled to have people talking about her, paying attention to her and all that she meant."

He has never known life without the bus, he said. "Dad was a magician, and the bus was just one of his tools," Mr. Kesey said. "I didn't know it was unusual. If you grow up in the circus, the circus is all you know."

Zane Kesey gave a tour of the farm before the bus left, including the small cemetery where his father and brother, Jed, are buried. Jed Kesey died at age 20 after a van carrying the University of Oregon wrestling team plunged off a cliff. Ken Kesey died at age 66.

Beyond the cemetery, past a thicket of trees and a now-dry creek bed, is the spot where the bus sat for many years, hidden from view with blackberry vines growing over it, before it was moved into the barn for protection.

Zane Kesey remembers helping to paint his father's bus in swirls of Day-Glo when he was a child.

According to Stephanie Kesey, Zane Kesey's wife, the news anchor Walter Cronkite once came to the farm to film a story about the bus, and his cameraman plunged through a rickety wooden bridge and into the creek.

Officials with the Smithsonian have also visited, wanting the bus but leaving instead with a plywood sign that the Merry Pranksters used as a makeshift bulletin board on their bus trip and that was found in a chicken coop.

"A family of foxes occupied the rear seat of Furthur, moldering in a field, so Kesey decided to donate this sign instead of the bus," reads the museum's website.

Stephanie Kesey said the idea after the exhibit ends in late October is to store the bus in a Burning Man warehouse in the East Bay while a fund-raising campaign proceeds to restore it and permanently display it in San Francisco.

"I don't think we'll ever see it come back to the farm," she said, adding that it was important for the public to view it again.

"Our need for color right now is very real," she said. "And peace and love, exploration and kindness."

Gazebos from Uzbekistan are latest gifts to Trump

WASHINGTON

The structures will go up at the president's planned garden dedicated to heroes

BY LUKE BROADWATER

A luxury jet from Qatar. A pair of leopards from Saudi Arabia. And now, the latest foreign gifts to arrive in President Trump's Washington are "exquisitely crafted" gazebos, courtesy of the president of Uzbekistan.

The Uzbek gazebos will be exhibited in West Potomac Park, the site of Mr. Trump's planned National Garden of American Heroes. Trucks carrying huge boxes with postage labels from Tashkent, the Uzbek capital, were spotted there in recent days. Parks in Uzbekistan feature gazebos with intricate, traditional Central Asian woodcarving.

"President Shavkat Mirziyoyev of Uzbekistan generously donated the traditional Uzbek gazebos to President Donald J. Trump, who accepted them on behalf of the people of the United States of America," said Katie Martin, the communications director for the Interior Department. "Visitors to West Potomac Park will be able to enjoy the exquisitely crafted pywans later this fall."

Mr. Trump is planning an expansive project in West Potomac Park, an area of mostly sports fields near the National Mall, that would include reflecting pools, dining facilities and an amphitheater alongside 250 life-size statues of notable Americans. Near the proposed Garden of Heroes is a golf course that Mr. Trump has proposed making into a luxury destination.

But both projects are in the early planning stages, according to Trump administration officials. Any plans for the Garden of Heroes would typically go through the National Capital Planning Commission and the Commission of Fine Arts, including the designs for individual statues. The U.S. Justice Department told a federal court last week that the Garden of Heroes remains merely a "vision" of the president's that is "still a preliminary concept."

In June, the United States and Uzbekistan accelerated negotiations toward a trade and investment deal.

Uzbekistan committed to eliminating or reducing tariffs on a wide range of U.S. industrial goods and agricultural products. The United States committed to providing "favorable consideration" in tariff actions for Uzbek industrial goods and agricultural products.

Last year, Mr. Trump and Mr. Mirziyoyev announced what they said was $32 billion in bilateral commercial deals. The United States also supports Uzbekistan in its World Trade Organization accession process.

Andrew Leyden contributed reporting.

ANDREW LEYDEN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Boxes with Uzbek gazebo components at West Potomac Park in Washington on Tuesday.

Desperation mounts in northern Indiana

Tens of thousands remain without power after storms cause flooding and havoc

BY JULIE BOSMAN
AND ROBERT CHIARITO

Grocery shelves have been empty for days. Children who had just started school haven't seen their classrooms in more than a week. Insulin has spoiled in warm refrigerators, and people who depend on oxygen cannot pump it from their tanks.

Electricity has been out for at least 10 days throughout much of Gary, Ind., since deadly storms ripped through, knocking down trees and power lines. On Friday, residents said they were growing increasingly desperate, even as another round of rain was on the way.

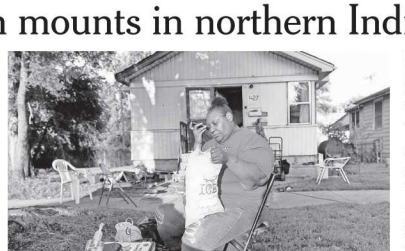
"Every day I'm crying," Renita Theus, 41, said outside her darkened apartment, where her car remained trapped under a fallen tree. "It's hot in the house. I toss and turn and can't sleep. I walked to the dollar store and they're all out of candles and batteries."

Storms on Aug. 11 caused flooding and havoc throughout the Chicago area and neighboring northern Indiana, hitting Gary, where one-third of residents live in poverty, especially hard. More than a week later, the regional power company said its crews were working tirelessly to restore electricity but were overwhelmed by unprecedented levels of damage.

The utility, Northern Indiana Public Service Co., said on Friday that 43,400 of its customers remained without power in the region, down from more than 300,000 in the storm's immediate aftermath. Service is expected to be restored to Gary by Tuesday, the company said, calling it a "monumental undertaking."

On Friday, Gov. Mike Braun said he had requested an expedited major disaster declaration from the Federal Emergency Management Agency that would allow more assistance to pour into the state. President Trump has granted an emergency declaration for Indiana counties affected by the disaster, and a state relief fund is providing emergency aid grants of as much as $5,000.

"I will do everything in my power to ensure Hoosiers have the resources needed to recover," said Mr. Braun, a Republican.



OCTAVIO JONES/REUTERS

Dinky Austin called the utility company for updates on when the power will be restored while she cooled off with ice outside of her home in Gary, Ind., last week.

Local officials warned that cleanup would likely take months.

"It's just widespread devastation throughout the city of Gary," said Larry E. Tillman, the chief of the fire department.

City officials said that donations of money and supplies had poured into Gary. Lowe's sent a truck with hundreds of buckets and cleanup kits, food trucks set up in neighborhoods to feed hungry residents and a medical facility equipped a bus to treat people. Shelters have opened to feed and house residents.

"I thought it was just a typical thunderstorm. It was way more devastating than I initially thought."

One company drove around handing out tarps so that residents could cover damaged roofs and prevent even more rain from seeping inside.

Mike Curtis, a 63-year-old retired truck driver, was busy on Friday sawing apart fallen trees behind his garage. He lives with his wife in a bungalow and has been without power since the storm.

"I've been in Gary since I was 4 years old," he said. "I've never seen anything like this."

To many people, the weather on Aug. 11 — ferocious rain, thunder and lightning — did not seem unusual for summer in the Midwest.

"I thought it was just a typical thunderstorm," said Raydia Martin, the assistant director of Flourish Community Hub, a nonprofit group that provides social services. "It was way more devastating than I initially thought."

Every day, her organization is now feeding hundreds of people who have no food at home and no access to meals at restaurants or even gas stations, many of which are closed.

As the days tick by, many residents said they are feeling a heavy sense of neglect.

Ms. Martin said she has heard a familiar refrain as residents wait for power to be brought back to their city, a former steel powerhouse that has seen industry close up or move away.

"I hear the sentiment a lot — it just feels like we're last in a lot of things," she said. "Historically, Gary has suffered from disinvestment. There's always this sentiment that we're just not cared for."

The unusually powerful winds that hammered Gary descended as a derecho, a group of intense thunderstorms that last several hours, traveled from eastern Iowa across Northern Illinois and Chicago and into Indiana.

The strongest gust recorded during the storms was 99 miles (160 kilometers) per hour, in Gary, said Brett Borchardt, a senior meteorologist with the National Weather Service office in Romeoville, Ill.

The city is beginning to recover, Chief Tillman said.

"We are coming out and we're caring for each other," he said.

But even with promises that power would be back by this week, frustrations were mounting.

Dottie Johnson, a 49-year-old rideshare driver, pulled into an Amoco service station on Friday. It was the third station she had tried that day, and she quickly learned that she was again wasting her time.

"They have no power, so there is no gas," Ms. Johnson said.

A generator was providing electricity for the station's store, which remained open. But an employee said the pumps had been dead for 10 days.

Ms. Johnson said the same was true at her home. She faulted the utility for letting trees grow taller than power lines.

"Look at those trees," she said, pointing across the street at trees that she judged as overgrown. "We can't do anything about Mother Nature, but they didn't do enough to prevent it."

Other residents agreed. On Friday, several filed a class-action lawsuit against the company, accusing it of failing to trim trees that have toppled onto power lines, causing outages.

Officials from the Public Service Co. have said that the storm was extraordinarily large and destructive.

"This storm caused unprecedented and widespread damage across our electric system," the utility said in a statement. "Thousands of individual repairs must be completed before service can be fully restored," it added.

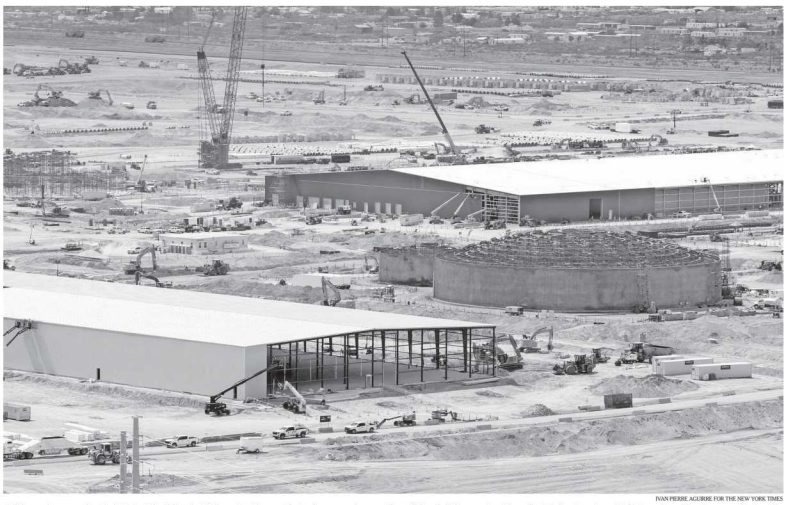
For residents like Ms. Theus, the challenges will not end even when the power comes back. She said she will need to figure out how to get the tree off her car — and find a new source of income. She lost her cleaning job in Chicago a few days ago, because she was not able to travel.

Others, Ms. Theus said, had it worse.

"There's a lot of people here struggling. I feel bad for newborn babies and people on ventilators," she said. "I think if this was a richer area, it would be different."

Julie Bosman reported from Chicago, and Robert Chiarito from Gary, Ind.

Business



IVAN PIERRE AGUIRRE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

A data center complex that Meta is building in El Paso. Until recently, tech companies mostly self-funded the construction of A.I. infrastructure. "That era is ending," one analyst said.

Risks of A.I. borrowing binge

Government bond yields rise, as tech companies switch from spending cash

BY JOE RENNISON

Economists have been repeatedly dumbfounded by the resilience of the American economy in the face of the Covid-19 pandemic, wars, tariffs, inflation and sharply higher interest rates. A simple answer has provided a catchall explanation: the growth of artificial intelligence.

But the growth of A.I. also poses a risk, reflected in the nearly two-decade highs that yields on U.S. government bonds hit last week, prompting the Treasury Department to try to put a lid on borrowing costs.

That risk stems from a borrowing binge by some of the biggest technology companies in the world. Until recently, the companies mostly self-funded the construction of data centers and other infrastructure that run their technologies. Now they are raising hundreds of billions of dollars by selling bonds to meet the voracious need for capital that advanced A.I. systems require.

"For most of the past decade, the large technology companies leading the A.I. build-out have funded their investment from operating cash flow," said Lucas Baynes, a senior investment strategist at Vanguard. "That era is ending."

Supercharged spending on A.I. financed in part by the surge in new bonds — over $200 billion so far this year among the largest A.I. companies — has prompted economists and investors to raise their forecasts for growth in the broader economy. Higher economic growth typically encourages the Federal Reserve to keep interest rates elevated to prevent that growth from leading to higher inflation.

Analysts said the recent rise in Treasury yields partly reflected expectations that A.I.-driven growth could push the Fed to keep rates elevated.

Last week, the yield on the 30-year U.S. government bond, a benchmark for consumer loans like mortgages, rose to its highest level since 2007. The yield fell briefly after the Treasury stepped into the market on Wednesday and increased the amount of its own debt it can buy, helping to expand demand, push up prices and reduce yields. But on Thursday, yields began rising again.

That poses a problem for policymakers. The Trump administration has promised to lower borrowing costs to help improve affordability for American households, using Treasury yields as a gauge of its success.

A.I. borrowing is not the only issue pushing Treasury yields, and interest rates more broadly, higher. Analysts have also pointed to the federal deficit and the prolonged war with Iran.

But the current confluence of risks in financial markets has made the A.I. build-out a double-edged sword. While A.I. has propped up the economy with its spending, it has also contributed to a rise in interest rates, reducing affordability for borrowers, who include consumers, businesses and the government itself.

"Further capital expenditure is no longer 'free.'"

The economy "has enjoyed a massive boost" from the five so-called A.I. hyperscalers — Alphabet, Amazon, Meta, Microsoft and Oracle — spending their enormous stockpiles of cash to develop A.I. infrastructure, said Matt King, founder of Satori Insights, a market research firm. But that has changed.

"Now that the hyperscalers are having to borrow, further capital expenditure is no longer 'free,'" Mr. King said, meaning there is not only a cost to the company in the form of interest but also a broader cost to the economy.

"Real yields are rising, raising costs for the rest of the economy," he added.

From 2020 to 2024, the five hyperscalers collectively issued an average of less than $30 billion in debt every year, according to data from Refinitiv. In 2025, that amount rose above $100 billion. So far this year, it has already topped $200 billion. Microsoft is the only one of the hyperscalers not to have raised money in the bond market over the past year.

Broader A.I.-related debt issuance — beyond the five hyperscalers — is expected to surpass $1 trillion annually from 2027 through 2030, according to Vanguard.

Some analysts have suggested that all this new debt is pulling investors away from the Treasury market, further raising yields on government bonds. But others say this is likely to have only a marginal effect, given that the Treasury market is so huge.

Still, the sheer deluge of supply has been somewhat overwhelming for bond investors to absorb. And some companies have started to pay more in interest to entice investors.

If yields are rising, prices are falling, and with no sign of the current deluge of debt slowing soon, investors are worried that the bonds they buy today will be less attractive if yields rise further.

"They're not in danger of defaulting," Mr. Eagan said. The concern is "about more debt coming at a cheaper price and you are left stuck holding this."

Drought threatens vital European artery

DUISBURG, GERMANY

BY CHRISTOPHER F. SCHUETZE AND PATRICIA COHEN

Ferocious heat waves, wildfires and freakish storms have pulverized Europe this summer. And a series of droughts, magnified by climate change, have crippled some of the continent's key waterways, bringing further economic pressure on a region struggling with stagnating growth and fierce global competition.

One center of the crisis is the "wide and winding Rhine" river, as Lord Byron put it, which stretches nearly 800 miles (1,300 kilometers) through six countries as it journeys from the Swiss Alps to the North Sea.

This vital economic artery conveys thousands of vessels and millions of tons of cargo a year that stoke trade and industry throughout the continent.

"It's one of the most important heart chambers of the German economy," said Carsten Brzeski, global head of macro research at ING, as well as a devoted rower.

This month, water levels hit their lowest point since 1880, when official measurements were first recorded, disrupting supply chains, raising shipping costs and possibly forcing companies to scale back on production.

The wave of extreme weather has also affected the Danube, the second longest river in Europe, where record low water levels have exposed the previously hidden hulks of warships sunk during World War II.

That water crisis has forced a scramble to keep electricity flowing in Hungary and Romania, which use water from the Danube to cool nuclear power reactors. Governments in both countries have appealed to households and businesses to reduce their power use.

The ripple effects of low water levels on the economy could be seen in Duisburg, Germany, where goods were being moved from bigger ships onto smaller ships, rail cars or trucks. Other boats unloaded as much as two-thirds of their cargo so they could safely navigate the river, which at some points had a depth of little more than four feet of water (1.2 meters).

"Now you see who is a good captain and who is a bad captain," said Wilma van Ingen, part of a Dutch husband-and-wife team that brought the 564-foot push freighter, W. De Beijer Sr, up from Rotterdam carrying iron ore.

Her ship, which can normally carry 5,000 tons, has been reduced to carrying just 1,200 tons.

Fewer loads mean heavier traffic.

"We are working at our limit," said Markus Bangen, the chief executive of Duisburg harbor, which processes some 100 million tons of cargo a year and handles more than 20,000 ships a year.

The Rhine shaped the geography of Germany's industrial might, as companies built their factories and trading routes along its shores. Titans of German manufacturing — BASF, Mercedes-Benz, Bayer and ThyssenKrupp — are along the route.

Nearly 300 million tons of cargo are carried by its waters each year. The Rhine connects the North Sea port of Rotterdam to three of Germany's largest industrial clusters, linking oil refineries, steel and chemical factories, coal-fired power plants and more along the way.

It would require as many as 100 trucks or an entire freight train to transport the cargo from a single river barge, Mr. Brzeski of ING said. But even substitutions are complicated. "The railways are a disaster as well," he added. And at the moment, construction work means one of the routes that runs along the river is not available.

A punishing drought in 2018 shuttered factories and ended up shaving 0.3 percent off Germany's overall output at the time, according to analysts.

The experience, though, prompted industry and officials to be more nimble, said Jens Schwanen, the director of the Federal Association of German Inland Navigation, an industry group.

"We cannot make water magically appear," he said.

Instead, companies have adapted. They have gotten better at planning for times when water levels run low. They have built more storage space in deep water ports, so goods can continue to be delivered, even when waterways run dry. This has been a strategy of Siemens Energy, whose 300-ton turbines cannot be transported by rail or road.

There has also been a move to build ships that travel higher in the water, using different materials and wider designs.

But the upgrades are slow. Of the nearly 8,000 cargo ships plying the Rhine, only about a dozen have been designed to handle low water levels.

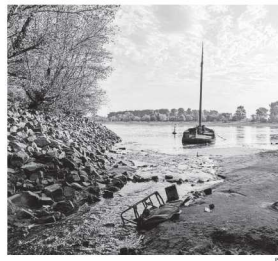
And slower traffic, lighter loads and alternate routes cost more. Consumers in Germany whose petrol is shipped on the river are paying as much as 11 cents more per liter (0.26 gallon), according to the German cartel office.

An analysis by the Kiel Institute for the World Economy, a German research center, concluded: "Low water levels lead to severe disruptions in inland water transportation and cause a significant and economically meaningful decrease of economic activity."

After a month of low water, "industrial production in Germany declines by about 1 percent," Kiel found.

The forces of geopolitics and geography are both taking their toll, with more to come. Less snowfall in the alps during the winter months caused lower river levels this summer. The drought now means there is less rain flowing into the river. The heat has made things worse, causing surface water to evaporate and lowering water levels at a very early point in the season.

Christopher F. Schuetze reported from Duisburg, and Patricia Cohen from London.



PATRICK JUNKER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

The wreck of a fishing boat in Germany that sank in 1996 is one of several relics exposed by low water levels in the Rhine River. The drought is impeding industrial traffic.

After rocket rise, Shein fights to keep growing

Fast-fashion brand flailing under tariff pressure while making moves for an I.P.O.

BY SUI-LEE WEE

Shein was once one of the most talked-about companies in retail.

It could spot what Generation Z wanted and, within days, turn those trends into $10 mesh dresses and $5 crop tops. Its clothes were so cheap and its churn of new styles was so relentless that #Sheinhaul became a phenomenon on TikTok. Shein overtook bigger rivals like Zara and H&M, started planning an initial public offering and, at one point, was valued at nearly $100 billion.

Now the buzz has faded.

After years of delay, Shein is close to going public — this time at a fraction of its peak valuation. It is searching for new ways to grow after the United States and Europe dismantled tariff exemptions on cheap goods that had helped underpin its low-cost model. Sales have fallen sharply in the United States, its largest market. And the company has offered investors few specifics about where meaningful new growth will come from.

"For a company as hyped as it was for such a long time, the music has seemingly run out," said Juozas Kaziukenas, an independent e-commerce analyst.

No Chinese fashion brand has been as successful as Shein at going global. And yet the company remains unusually reclusive.

Its founder and chief executive, Sky Xu Yangtian, is so private that until he appeared publicly in February, most of the photographs circulating online purporting to show him were false. Even a senior overseas Shein executive, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak with the media, said he had never met or interacted with Mr. Xu.

Shein declined requests for an interview. The timing and pricing details of its market debut have not been announced, but the company filed a prospectus with the Hong Kong Stock Exchange last month.

Shein has taken pains to distance itself from its Chinese origins. In 2019, it established its headquarters in Singapore and de-registered its original Chinese corporate entity a few years later. The aim was, in part, to navigate Chinese rules governing companies seeking offshore listings and clear a path toward an I.P.O. in New York.

The strategy failed. In the United States, Shein encountered intense, bipartisan scrutiny from lawmakers over its supply chain and labor practices. After abandoning its New York listing effort in 2024, it turned to London, where it faced similar resistance from nongovernmental organizations and other protesters.

That left Hong Kong as the last major viable venue. But after years of delay, analysts say Shein may have missed its moment.

The turn toward Hong Kong has also put Shein in the awkward position of having to re-embrace the Chinese identity it once tried to play down. In China, the company has faced criticism for "blooming in China but bearing fruit abroad" — a phrase suggesting that Shein built its success in the country while redirecting profits overseas.

Then, in February, the famously elusive Mr. Xu suddenly appeared before officials in Guangdong Province.

"Guangdong is Shein's root," he declared, announcing that Shein would invest about $1.4 billion over the next three years to build a supply chain hub there.

Chinese media initially covered the speech. Then some articles began disappearing from the internet. Lu Minghe, a veteran journalist, posted a notice showing that Shein had demanded that his public WeChat account remove an article about Mr. Xu's appearance, citing "infringement."

Even as Shein recalibrates its relationship with China, a more fundamental problem hangs over any potential listing.

Jianggan Li, founder of Momentum Works, a consultancy that has followed Shein closely, said prospective investors had told him that they sensed little enthusiasm from its founders. "There hasn't been any effort to drum up interest," Mr. Li said. "I don't feel there's a strong desire for the management to make the company public, aside from the fact that the investors want to exit."

Investors are asking how Shein can keep growing.

President Trump's decision last year to end a policy that had allowed billions of dollars of low-cost imports to enter the United States duty-free dealt a major blow in its single biggest market. In May 2025, Shein began raising prices in the United States.

In the first quarter of 2026, U.S. net revenue fell 14.3 percent to $2 billion, the company said.

Europe could pose an even greater challenge. Last month, European authorities announced a 3-euro ($3.50) flat fee on e-commerce parcels that had previously entered duty-free.

Shein is now trying to convince investors that its future goes beyond ultracheap clothes by selling access to the system it built to design, produce, market and deliver products quickly.

So far, there is little evidence that the supply chain strategy is paying off. Since offering the service as a pilot in 2023, Shein has signed up only about 20 brands. The program generated less than 1 percent of its total net revenue in 2025, according to the company.

Shen Meng, a director at Chanson & Co., an investment banking firm in Beijing, said Shein succeeded in part because it was willing to squeeze its own costs and margins — trade-offs that other brands using its platform may be unwilling to accept.

"It's hard to see any outstanding advantages in Shein's transition," Mr. Shen said.

Shein's founder is so private that until he appeared publicly in February, most photos purporting to show him were false.

Shein is also branching out into furniture, cosmetics, pet products and electronics. Nonapparel goods accounted for more than a third of its revenue in the first quarter.

Other analysts are similarly skeptical that Shein has found a second act.

"It's not clear, other than really cheap, ultrafast fashion, what they're going to be able to generate," said Sucharita Kodali, an e-commerce expert at Forrester, a research agency.

Shein's first act was remarkable.

It was founded in 2012 by Mr. Xu and three colleagues at a marketing firm that helped Chinese exporters sell products online. In 2015, it shortened its name from Sheinside to Shein.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, as online shopping exploded, Shein's popularity surged. The company saturated the internet with advertisements aimed at young consumers, enticing them with extremely low prices and constantly changing designs.

By 2022, Shein became the world's biggest online fashion retailer. That year, it was valued at $98.2 billion and backed by a roster of big-name venture capital investors.

The secret was a system built to compress the traditional fashion cycle. Shein used algorithms to track emerging trends, then placed initial orders of a few hundred units to test demand. The model allowed it to introduce approximately 4,700 new apparel styles a day. Zara, by comparison, produces 20,000 a year, according to analysts.

Shein paired that technology with an industrial ecosystem concentrated in Guangdong, where spinners, weavers, seamstresses and small factories could rapidly manufacture orders as small as 100 pieces.

But Shein has struggled to duplicate its Chinese supply chain model in countries such as Turkey and Vietnam, according to Mr. Li of Momentum Works. At the same time, competitors like Temu arrived with even broader product assortments and even lower prices.

Mr. Kaziukenas said he had scoured Shein's prospectus to find the answer to a question that he'd had for years: "What is the future of Shein?" He added: "I don't think we got that answer."

Li You contributed research.

SARAH PARIS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Customers at a Shein resale store in Buenos Aires last year. Shein built its success by closely monitoring trends and introducing thousands of new apparel styles a day.

BUSINESS

Conflict could sting U.S. consumers

WASHINGTON

New headaches in store, especially for those doing business along busy border

BY TONY ROMM

CARLOS OSORIO/REUTERS

Renewed trade conflict could cause harm in both the United States and Canada. Above, the new Gordie Howe bridge between Detroit and Windsor, Ontario; left, plywood production in British Columbia.

JENNIFER GAUTHIER/REUTERS

Since President Trump has returned to office, the United States and Canada have repeatedly come close to an all-out trade war — only for Mr. Trump to dial back some of his harshest attacks against one of America's closest allies.

But that period of relative calm came to an end on Saturday, as new 50 percent tariffs from Washington took effect, drawing a pointed threat from Canada to respond in kind. The resulting clash left the two North American neighbors barreling toward a dangerous tit-for-tat escalation, one that may yet inflict real harm on the U.S. economy.

For Mr. Trump, the return to trade brinkmanship reaffirmed a time-old truth: His tariffs are taxes on imports, meaning some of the cost of his latest duties may ultimately fall hardest on U.S. importers stung by years of persistently high prices.

Although Mr. Trump's tariffs only cover a small subset of Canadian goods, the consequences could quickly spiral. If Canada retaliates, and Mr. Trump does the same, the result could be a series of new shocks for the U.S. economy at a time when it is already weathering plenty.

"The bigger deal is uncertainty," said Scott Lincicome, the vice president of general economics at the Cato Institute.

Overall, the tariffs apply to a small fraction of trade between the two nations, muting the impact, at least for now.

Mr. Lincicome said that volatility had pervaded Mr. Trump's entire second term, as his ever-shifting tariffs — raised and lowered sometimes by the stroke of a pen — roil Wall Street, anger the courts, infuriate U.S. allies and help to drive up the price of consumer goods domestically.

With Canada, though, Mr. Lincicome said the new clash could weigh heavily on businesses that transact across the U.S.-Canadian border. The retaliatory tariff increases could affect prices, and consequently translate to "slightly less investment, slightly less economic activity," while the confusing trade climate persists.

In the end, Mr. Trump could still avert catastrophe and strike a deal with Canada. As of Saturday, that appeared unlikely: Jamieson Greer, the U.S. trade representative, told Fox News that there were no new talks planned with his Canadian counterparts, adding that the administration was "moving forward" with its tariffs.

In response, Canada showed no sign that it planned to back down. Hours later, Mark Carney, the country's prime minister, threatened to unveil its own tariff measures against the United States shortly after Labor Day on Sept. 7, targeting sectors including agriculture, steel and electronics.

At one point, Mr. Carney even said his country was "at war."

Mr. Trump's new duties — set at 50 percent — apply to about $20 billion in Canada's exports to the United States, according to administration officials. The list of covered goods numbers into the hundreds, and includes Canadian-made hockey sticks, furniture and dairy products, which could become too expensive for U.S. consumers to import.

Overall, though, the tariffs apply to a small fraction of trade between the two nations, muting the impact, at least for now. In an early analysis, John Ricco, the deputy director of policy analysis at the Yale Budget Lab, a nonpartisan think tank, said the new tariffs would raise the average tariff rate on Canadian imports to about 7.6 percent, from roughly 5.3 percent.

The United States already had in place steep tariffs on other critical Canadian imports, including its lumber, steel and cars. But, unlike Mr. Trump's past tariffs, the duties he imposed on Saturday come with no special exemption for goods that are otherwise covered under a trade agreement the United States brokered with Canada and Mexico, a pact that the president separately has said he hopes to revise or kill.

Joe Brusuelas, the chief economist at the audit and consulting firm RSM US, said he still believed a deal was possible. But he added that the risks of escalation were also real — and could be costly.

For one thing, Mr. Brusuelas said he expected that Canada might take aim "where it hurts the most," perhaps including the U.S. auto industry. That could result in "risks around the inflation outlook" at a time when manufacturing continues to lag.

A retaliatory cycle could complicate Washington's existing battle with inflation, which remains well above the Federal Reserve's 2 percent target.

Increasingly, those economic anxieties have also spilled into financial markets. Concerns about America's mounting debt load, which hit $40 trillion last week, helped send yields on government bonds soaring. The war with Iran has also posed economic challenges, crimping growth globally while causing fuel costs to rise.

Some Democrats in Congress cited additional risks as they attacked the president in recent days, arguing that his threats against Canada could create real economic blowback for the United States. Shortly after the tariffs went into effect, Senator Peter Welch, Democrat of Vermont, described the duties as a "slap in the face" to those in his state that do business across the border.

"Cross-border business relationships, built over decades, are in the lurch," he said. "Uncertainty about a long-term trade deal with our closest ally has grown, and long-term trade negotiations seem to now be on ice."

But there was still a sense among some on Washington and Wall Street that the worst with Canada might still be avoided — and that the drama playing out in public reflected the now-usual course of business with Mr. Trump.

"We've all been conditioned to the sequencing of these negotiations," Mr. Brusuelas said.

Canada takes risky stand in trade war

CANADA, FROM PAGE 1

trade negotiations fall apart.

On Saturday, Mr. Carney mentioned in some detail a number of what he described as last-minute curveballs presented by the United States, as talks were supposedly near the finish line. Those included, he said, a demand that Canada comply with U.S. diktats on tariffs on its trade with other countries.

"We are the partners of choice for countries around the world and the Americans wanted to restrict that — unacceptable," he said.

Make no mistake, Mr. Carney has a lot to lose.

Canada, which is closely integrated with the United States and relies on it for defense, is heavily dependent on trade with its superpower neighbor. Mr. Carney acknowledged on Saturday the cost of his choice for many Canadians and said his government would do "whatever it takes" to support businesses and workers impacted by the U.S. tariffs, as well as those impacted by the retaliatory tariffs Canada will take out against U.S. goods on Sept. 8.

It will also be costly for U.S. residents, who have been paying for Mr. Trump's tariff policies through higher prices that have also been driven by the war in Iran and spiraling oil costs.

But Mr. Carney appeared resolved to shoulder the costs of his decision. And he has risked Mr. Trump's ire before.

In a speech in Davos, Switzerland, in January, he described a new era in which the United States was no longer a guarantor of stability and where middle powers like Canada have to unite to survive. The speech — and its enthusiastic global reception — angered Mr. Trump.

Mr. Trump has also been riled by Mr. Carney's outreach to China, which led to a narrow but significant trade agreement this year; by Canadian provinces' persistence on banning the sale of U.S. liquor; and by the Carney government's retaliatory measures against the United States for its broad, devastating tariffs on core Canadian industries.

Since he rose to lead Canada last year, Mr. Carney has put in motion a plan to help his country survive Mr. Trump's presidency and, in the long run, thrive apart from the United States. One of his favorite lines is that "nostalgia is not a policy," and he has told everyone who will listen that there is no going back to the old relationship with the United States — a close and familial, if lopsided, bond.

Instead, Mr. Carney has been traveling to secure new partnerships in Asia and Europe, a generational shift away from economic dependence on the United States, although that is unlikely to bear fruit fast enough to cushion the blow of the breakdown of the two countries' relationship.

It's likely that Mr. Trump will not take kindly to Mr. Carney's trade decision. Just before beginning his second term, Mr. Trump said he was willing to inflict "economic pain" on Canada. He has repeatedly expressed a desire to make Canada the 51st state.

But Mr. Carney's vision for Canada, with a surprising assist from Mr. Trump's needling, has ignited a wave of patriotism. Going into the trade talks, more than half of Canadians — many more than those who voted for Mr. Carney — said they wanted him to give nothing away.

Several premiers of different political stripes expressed their support for Mr. Carney after his decision. Doug Ford, a conservative who leads Ontario, cheered him on. David Eby, the progressive premier of British Columbia, said, "We didn't ask for this, but we'll keep fighting for as long as it takes."

Not everyone is enthusiastic. Danielle Smith, the conservative premier of Alberta, who has good relations with the MAGA movement, was more circumspect and urged Mr. Carney to return to the negotiating table. Canada's industry is aghast with the prolonged turbulence and uncertainty that Mr. Trump's trade war against Canada, and Mr. Carney's refusal to submit, are causing.

But there is little doubt that Mr. Carney will also be cheered, at home and abroad, for doing what he thought was best for his country.

"We take this step confident that it is in the best interests of Canada," he said. "And that, by rejecting a bad deal, standing up for Canada, and focusing on what we can control, we are building a Canada strong for all."

PATRICK DOYLE/THE CANADIAN PRESS, ASSOCIATED PRESS

Mark Carney, Canada's prime minister, said on Saturday that "Canada is becoming stronger and less dependent on America."

Odd array of targets for Trump's 50% levies

OTTAWA

U.S. shoppers will find dog muzzles and national flags more expensive

BY IAN AUSTEN

The three documents listing the hundreds of goods from Canada subject to new 50 percent tariffs that took effect on Saturday are, in many ways, like a return to the internet of the mid-1990s: long lists of products in unadorned text, seemingly organized at random.

The Trump administration imposed the tariffs after Prime Minister Mark Carney of Canada called off trade negotiations that had lasted nearly a month. "They asked too much and offered too little," Mr. Carney said.

Mr. Carney has promised to retaliate "dollar for dollar" against the new U.S. tariffs, which join previous tariffs of up to 50 percent President Trump put on Canadian aluminum, steel and autos last year. Lumber has tariffs that predate Mr. Trumps's return to office but which he nevertheless increased last year.

Here are some of the goods that are subject to the new tariffs:

According to the U.S. administration, the items on the lists cover $20 billion in Canadian exports. For Canadian companies that depend on U.S. business, the tariffs are likely a source of great anxiety. For the customs brokers and trade lawyers who guide those companies in the new world order, they are an extraordinary business opportunity. For the lay reader, they are sometimes baffling.

Some clear patterns emerge, however, from the text. Canada's forest industry — which has been enmeshed in a seemingly endless battle with the United States for decades — has been particularly targeted. On the lists, the many wood products include 36 different kinds of plywood alone. As with softwood lumber, home builders in the United States have already said that there is not enough American product to replace Canadian plywood, so the tariffs could increase housing construction costs.

Alcohol is also prominent. The Trump administration has been particularly vexed by the fact that eight of Canada's 10 provinces still restrict U.S. wine and spirits from their government-owned liquor distribution system and stores. Those measures began after Mr. Trump suggested making Canada the 51st state and imposed tariffs in violation of the free trade agreement between the two countries and Mexico.

Canada's forest industry is a particular target.

Some of the drinks now effectively shut out from the United States by tariffs hold little obvious appeal, including "mixtures of or with a basis of odoriferous substances with 20 to 50 percent alcohol by weight requiring only the addition of ethyl alcohol or water to be a beverage." Left unexplained is why anyone would add more alcohol to something that is already half composed of the intoxicant.

Dairy products are another target. Canada's supply-management system uses production quotas and other tools to protect domestic dairy producers, who sell largely to the Canadian market, potentially limiting the effect of the new U.S. duties.

Clothing and textiles also take a hit. Like the United States, much of Canada's clothing production moved overseas long ago, but some Canadian online retailers sell goods made abroad to U.S. customers.

Few items of clothing escaped the tariffs. They include overcoats, anoraks, windbreakers, sleeveless jackets, cotton sweaters, T-shirts, car coats, capes, cloaks, track suits, suit jackets, blazers and dresses. Gloves, mittens and mitts are on the list unless they are related to sports.

Also included are national flags, canvas used for painting stage backdrops, tarpaulins, awnings and sun blinds.

Not every item on the list comes from large companies.

Several products, including jewelry and honey, come from small, even one-person operations.

The tariff list has a bit of a spoilsport bent by including "articles for Christmas festivities; ornaments, not of glass or wood"; toys, including riding ones but not bikes; fishing rods; hockey sticks; skates; and "festive, carnival or other entertainment articles." Dog owners will see similar increases in the price of leashes, collars, muzzles and harnesses.

Many products — including studio television cameras and smartphones — do not appear to be manufactured in Canada at all.

And there is perhaps the finest of all exports from Canada to the United States: "wigs (partial), false beards, eyebrows and the like, of synthetic textile materials."

Opinion

Keep your eye on ICE

The White House deportation machine has only ramped up.

David Wallace-Wells

The resistance looked immediately victorious and momentous: Last January, facing a kind of invasion by federal agents, the liberal citizens of Minneapolis stood their ground. They forced confrontation after confrontation with Immigration and Customs Enforcement and Border Patrol officers, eventually routing them from the city and bringing the mass deportation project of the U.S. president's second term to what looked like a humiliating end.

The response was heroic, especially given the purposeful brutality of the campaign, called Operation Metro Surge, which resulted in the killing of two American citizens — and perhaps even more so, given everything we have since learned about the full scale of the surveillance and counterintelligence operation federal agents were running, in real time, against those organizing to stymie them.

The problem is, ICE didn't really disappear when Operation Metro Surge ended in February, and the project of mass deportation wasn't shelved when the Border Patrol chief, Greg Bovino, retired and the Department of Homeland Security secretary, Kristi Noem, was later replaced by Markwayne Mullin. In the summer harshly hawkish immigration enforcement began in earnest again, this time a bit more carefully designed to maximize seizures and deportations rather than blood-and-soil spectacle.

By the numbers, the new strategy has worked. ICE arrests hit a new high in July. Deportations are on track to be higher this fiscal year than last one, and removals of people seized inside the country could easily reach new highs. Alligator Alcatraz, as a Florida detention facility was known, closed in June, but the number of immigrants held in detention by ICE has grown by 75 percent since President Trump returned to office in 2025. In 2024, ICE's operations and support budget was under $10 billion; in 2025, Mr. Trump's signature policy legislation helped allocate more than $70 billion in additional funding to the agency, including $45 billion to expand detention capacity. ICE is now the country's best-funded law enforcement agency. "We have never seen the detention system anywhere near this scale or size," said Aaron Reichlin-Melnick of the American Immigration Council. "And it's really crucial to understand that this is a decade-plus-long operation as they are planning it."

The U.S. midterms and the next presidential election are obvious speed bumps for those plans, given how much the ICE budget has ballooned under Mr. Trump and how much political capital would be required to extend that funding. But in terms of arrests, the damage done this summer swells beyond what was done in any single month leading up to Minneapolis. And yet despite the horrifying scale, the mass deportation project has generated much less public outrage in the second year of Mr. Trump's second term, with liberals notching Minneapolis as an incredible victory before turning their attention elsewhere.

When a Maine resident was shot and killed by an ICE officer in July, allegations of the officer's violent past briefly became a minor national news story, then faded into background noise.

There was perhaps even less attention paid to a killing in Houston last month, when ICE officers shot a man driving a construction van on his way to a work site. This year a federal judge reviewing officers' claims of being attacked by drivers in Chicago wrote that it was "difficult, if not impossible" to believe their stance that vehicular confrontations with protesters had been defensive maneuvers. Since the start of Mr. Trump's second term, at least 10 people have been killed in immigration operations, and dozens more have died in immigration detention.

By February, Mr. Trump's approval on immigration fell 12 percentage points below its peak early in his second term, but it now sits comfortably above his overall approval rating, and he retains the support of a large majority of Republicans on the issue. We don't see Democrats storming in to protest deportation hearings much anymore, and we don't even see them spending much time emphasizing the cruel excesses of Mr. Trump's border and immigration policies on the campaign trail, either.

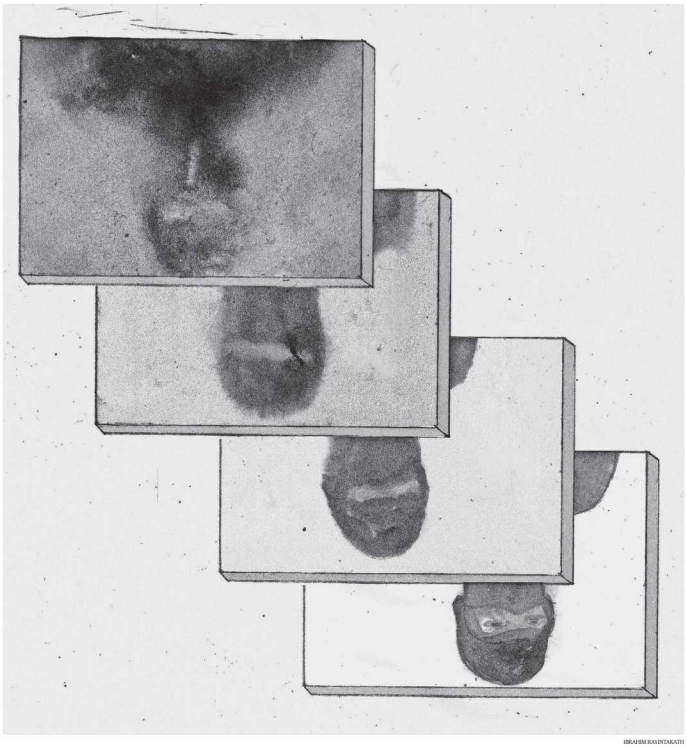
This is politics, of course, at least in part. But in the winter, it might have seemed that mass deportation was turning immigration into an issue Democrats might exploit to their advantage, with backlash powering what appeared to be a distaste for ICE and Customs and Border Protection and growing sympathy for immigrants. In fact, those survey numbers have fallen back over the past year, with American support for immigration lower now than it was at a peak in 2025. And the issue has also collapsed in salience since Metro Surge, particularly if you measure it in headlines, cable news segments and social media virality.

Removals of people seized inside the U.S. could easily reach new highs.

In part, the country has grown less outraged because the Department of Homeland Security has strategically recalibrated its approach, jettisoning the shock-and-awe-style sweeps and instead targeting those it knew how to find — at least in part, seemingly, by going after those who had been complying with immigration policies in ways that made them easily traceable by federal authorities. There's been less emphasis on intimidation of recalcitrant communities and more emphasis on quickly finding and arresting those it knows it can detain and deport. It appears less focused on making ICE sizzle reels lately and, to judge by the relative paucity of citizen documentation, more effective in tracking and suppressing resistance. Operations have gotten faster and more targeted.

As always, the enduring laws of attentional chaos in the Trump era also play a role. Deportation outrage gave way to worry over the Iran war, among other fights and scandals. But I think normalization is coming from the other direction, too, with liberal complacency setting in as the lame-duck mood spreads through Trumpland.

One aspect of the vibe shift against Mr. Trump and Trumpism is that even those most outraged about the president and his path of destruction might now see a light at the end of the tunnel, in the form of dismal approval ratings and the coming midterms and then 2028. For a decade, Mr. Trump has been unmistakably the main character in American politics, dictating national attention even when out of power. But over the past few months that, too, has changed, with tensions in the Democratic Party and its contest for future leadership becoming more central preoccupations and the fall elections drawing attention forward in ways that can serve to minimize the damage of the recent past, almost like a camera obscura casting a miniature image, inverted, against an opposite wall.



IBRAHIM RAYINTAKATH

Of course, the damage has been absolutely immense — to health care and SNAP, to pollution standards and basic expectations of public integrity, to America's standing in the world and its role in global energy markets (not to mention its munitions stockpile), to scientific research and public health. And not least, on the border, where a large-scale deportation program is, even though unfolding somewhat offscreen, producing humanitarian outrages that used to pull liberal America's attention into focus.

ICE is planning to buy electroshock gloves sold with the promise that the jolts will not leave any marks. The Department of Homeland Security is deporting Mexican nationals to Honduras and Guatemala, even though their native country is perfectly willing to accept them, and will be sending more than 1,000 others to countries in Africa, including countries the State Department considers unsafe, for what seem to be punitive reasons. In August, Maryam Tahmasebi, an Iranian professor of psychology and statistics in Los Angeles, published an open letter in The Nation documenting her experience in a detention center in Texas, where she has spent more than 120 days with her 16-year-old son, separated from her husband. All three were legal permanent residents.

In April, months after the initial deportation surge had subsided, Ms. Tahmasebi got a text from her son that his father hadn't arrived to pick him up from school. Eventually she discovered that her husband was being held at an ICE facility in downtown Los Angeles, and he told her he'd been assured that, whatever bureaucratic tangle he'd gotten caught up in — his mother worked with the Iranian hostage takers before he was born — she and their son were safe. The next day, as she prepared to drive her son to school, their car was surrounded by Department of Homeland Security officers, and the two were handcuffed and sent from Los Angeles to Texas, where they've been detained since. "This is bloodline punishment," she wrote; neither she nor her husband has so much as a traffic ticket. "I will end on this: If this could happen to us, a law-abiding family of two professors and a young boy, it can happen to anyone."

Stories like these were available in endless scroll a year ago, stoking liberal outrage almost by the day. The sentiment hasn't grown less true in the meantime, however irregularly we may be clocking it.

DAVID WALLACE-WELLS *is a writer for Opinion and The Times Magazine and the author of "The Uninhabitable Earth."*

Some reasons women learn to downplay their pain

We learn early to appease authority figures — even if they're doctors asking how we feel.

Allison Sweet Grant

Approximately five hours into my first chemotherapy infusion, the muscles in my back began to spasm. A little at first, but then quickly the spasms grew stronger and stronger, until it felt as if the muscles were being ripped from my bones. Newly diagnosed with breast cancer, I had been medicated with steroids for a long and taxing treatment, but even so, my body had a rare reaction. My face turned a deep red. My blood pressure spiked. I couldn't speak, couldn't see, couldn't breathe. I became sick with the pain.

Very quickly, the small room flooded with nurses. My oncologist was summoned over the P.A. system and ran in just in time to find me arching out of the semireclined vinyl chemo chair. After what seemed like an eternity, they pumped enough Benadryl through my veins to get the reaction under control. When I was coherent again, the first words out of my mouth were "I'm sorry." Immediately followed by "I'm fine."

As a former nurse practitioner, I know I'm not the only patient to behave this way. For every sick person who's loud or demanding or belligerent, somewhere within a medical suite there's another who's sugarcoating, suppressing or understating her pain.

The impulse shows up in many ways. Answering providers' questions with what we think they want to hear. Saying yes when we want to say no. Holding our tongue when we sense something may be wrong. In the face of dire circumstances — devastating diagnoses, shattered realities, excruciating physical pain — there's a desire to be easy. Flexible. Polite. It's almost as if we're auditioning for a role we've created in our heads. The role of the perfect patient.

ABRAHAH LOYND

From an early age, we're all taught to seek the approval of authority figures. In many households, children are taught to placate their parents or face punishment. Students learn to follow teachers' directions or risk receiving poor marks.

Physicians are perceived by many as the ultimate authority figures. They're busy professionals in one of the highest-status occupations in America. They hold the knowledge to heal us but also the power to harm us. We worry that if we make things too complicated, they might care less about us. And for good reason: In a study of more than 2,000 patients, those who suffered from medical professionals' diagnostic errors were twice as likely to be described with stigmatizing language in their medical records. Once labeled difficult, patients were more likely to face barriers and receive poor care.

Receiving good health care is not just about finding good doctors. Patients who disagree with their doctor can be "fired" or flagged with scarlet letters in the corners of their electronic medical charts. "Exaggerating." "Resistant." "Noncompliant." "Hysterical." To be sure, there are problematic patients, even dangerous ones. But for the rest of us, the imbalance between our defenselessness and the doctor's discretion can create an unhelpful dynamic, one that pushes us to stop advocating and start accommodating. The result is waiting rooms full of people pleasers and providers who never get the full picture.

The pressure to be pleasant and pliant is especially strong for women. Just as "bossy" women often don't get promotions and "uppity" women are more likely to be sexually harassed, women who are branded as difficult patients are at risk of not being taken seriously or losing access to care. This is one of the reasons women overapologize, even for their own pain.

It is the doctors' responsibility to create a climate of psychological safety.

A simple disclaimer — "I don't mean to be difficult, but . . . " — can backfire as well. (I can't help worrying that having this article published will offend someone and earn me a label of my own.) Swallowing our pain is particularly dangerous because extensive research shows that even when women and men have the same symptoms, physicians frequently take longer to diagnose conditions in women — and when they eventually do, they often prescribe women less pain medication. For patients who are members of minority groups or lower income brackets or who don't have health insurance, the pressure to acquiesce may be even greater.

Doctors can't be expected to recognize every time patients hold their tongue or downplay their pain, but it is the doctors' responsibility to create a climate of psychological safety so patients feel comfortable speaking. Within the past two decades, medical schools have begun offering more courses in emotional intelligence, communication and listening. This is a step in the right direction, but it's rarely enough. Patients are still afraid, and the health care system is a scary enough place as it is.

As a cancer patient, even six years later, I feel fortunate to have providers who go out of their way to let me know my job is not to please them but, rather, to tell them how I'm really feeling, so that they can help me.

Patients should never feel they need to hide their emotions in order to appear agreeable, minimize their symptoms in order to be taken seriously or apologize for their pain.

Is that rude of me to say? I don't mean to be difficult. I'm sorry. I'm fine.

ALLISON SWEET GRANT *is the author of the forthcoming book "Lump: A Memoir in Ineloquent Reflections."*

OPINION

The New York Times
INTERNATIONAL EDITION

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Why are colleges giving financial aid to rich kids?

Angel B. Pérez

Millions of students will soon arrive on U.S. college campuses, full of excitement and trepidation about what's to come. Some will bring a special gift: a grant, known as merit aid. That's different from the financial aid that goes to students who can't afford the sticker price. Merit aid is in effect a signing bonus, a cash incentive to attract the most desirable students.

So who counts as desirable? These bonuses were originally intended for students with exceptional academic achievement, people who could contribute to the college environment and who have many admissions offers to choose from. Today, however, colleges and universities are increasingly using these grants for a very different purpose: to lure wealthy students, the ones who need the money least. And these institutions are drawing the merit aid from their limited financial aid budgets, leaving less money for students who need it most.

Examining the brutal math of modern higher education in America.

Two recent analyses — from the Brookings Institution and the organization I lead, the National Association for College Admission Counseling — show that in the past 20 years this trend has accelerated, while need-based financial aid has dwindled. Money that could be used to expand educational opportunity is increasingly being used to further entrench financial privilege.

As a former dean of admissions, I know this strategy well. For years, I awarded millions of dollars to wealthy students. I didn't do it because I cared less about low- and middle-income students, but because of the brutal math of modern higher education in the United States.

Consider two students applying to a college that costs $80,000 a year. One comes from a high-income family and receives a $20,000 merit scholarship. If the student enrolls, the institution nets $60,000. The other student is from a low-income family and needs $70,000 in aid to enroll, leaving the institution with only $10,000 in revenue. Which student do you think I incentivized?

As crazy as that might seem, merit aid is just a symptom of a bigger problem: While other nations are investing aggressively in higher education, the United States starves it. Our colleges and universities, long recognized as a hallmark of our excellence, have been steadily defunded over recent decades.

The Pell Grant — America's best tool for supporting low-income college-bound students — is facing an $11.5 billion shortfall. Federal and state funding has been gutted. Millions of research dollars that once flowed into institutions have been slashed, as have loans for graduate school tuition. Colleges are facing a shrinking pipeline of high school seniors, and shifting federal policies are making it more difficult to enroll international students.

This July, the Department of Homeland Security announced that international students can study in America for only four years. That will make it harder for U.S. colleges to attract them — a loss for many reasons, including the fact that international students typically pay full fare to study here. That revenue has helped keep our institutions afloat and subsidized the cost for American students.

Now many colleges are scrambling to keep the lights on. Using merit aid to attract students who can pay at least a significant part of the sticker price is one way these colleges live to teach another year.

To be clear, colleges have not been innocent bystanders in their decline. With the cost of attendance at some institutions now approaching or even surpassing $100,000 a year, it's no surprise Americans have lost trust in higher education. Raising prices and using opaque discounting strategies won't bring students in the door. To survive, American higher education must demonstrate it is willing to reinvent itself, not simply defend the same broken system.

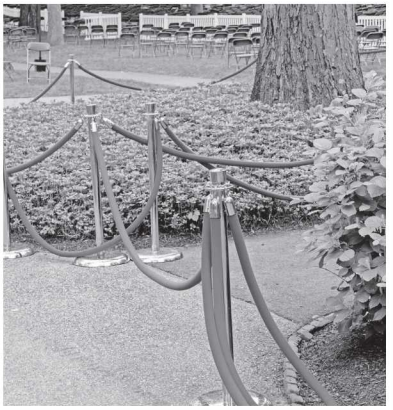
We should all want it to succeed. Higher education is one of the most powerful engines of economic mobility. Research shows that 10 years after enrollment, students who attended college generated an estimated $73.4 billion in additional annual earnings compared with high school graduates. The fewer people we educate, the fewer workers we have in high-paying sectors — a risk we cannot afford as we face a declining birthrate that threatens labor shortages. High wages lead to more tax revenue.

So this should be a priority for voters and lawmakers. It should also be a priority for the millions of Americans who once relied on financial aid to attend college. Far too many — more and more each year — turn away when their alma maters ask them to help the next generation. Donations alone won't solve the problem, but if higher education opened doors for you, stop looking the other way. Pay it forward.

Back in my admissions director days, when people objected to the use of merit aid, I often responded with a simple truth: We need the money. It was unavoidable. Yet that didn't make it right. Bidding wars for wealthy students are inherently distasteful. In a healthier system, they would be unnecessary — or even illegal.

If we are to find a way out of this cynical calculus, America has to make a choice. We can continue starving higher education and accept a future where opportunity belongs to those who can afford it. Or, we can recommit to public investment and philanthropy, to building institutions that are within reach for the average American, and to the belief that it's talent and tenacity, not family income, that should lead young people to opportunity.

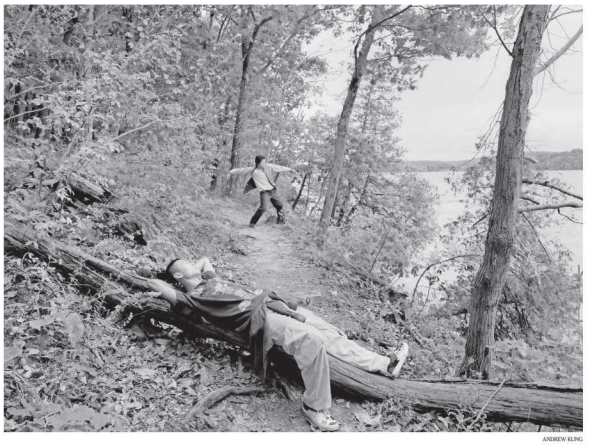
ANGEL B. PÉREZ *is the author of "The Hottest Seat on Campus: A Roadmap for Mastering Leadership in College Admission."*



AMANI WILLETT FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Status defines too many friendships

Christine Emba
Contributing Writer



ANDREW KUNG

Why do I feel as if I'm being sold friends?

Join a "modern social club," one ad beckons. "Turn strangers into friends" via curated dinner parties at trendy restaurants. A luxury condo building flogs its "community clubhouse" as an exciting amenity, and yet another social start-up informs me, rather ominously, that "we find your people."

It's possible that my feeds are too well primed: The algorithms can tell that I'm in my 30s, that I'm living in a U.S. city known for its transience and that I frequently search for data on and read stories about our changing social lives. But the sheer number of these ads suggests that the need for friendship is widespread enough that an industry is forming around it.

There are the run clubs and exercise cults. On Instagram, I was seduced by a vibey post reminiscing about the precell-phone era of house parties. After I swiped through a carousel of nostalgia-inducing pictures, I was invited to just that kind of gathering — for a fee.

The loneliness epidemic has been well publicized, from the surgeon general's repeated warnings to musings in major media outlets. And the loneliness market has boomed: Venture capital firms are investing in social and relational health; technologists are selling companions and chatbots as cures for isolation; politicians and philanthropists have adopted "belonging" as a buzzword.

Even though I'd still love to make more friends, I'm lucky to already be embedded in a tight-knit group dating back to college. And these for-profit solutions all seem pitched at those who need them the least — socializing positioned as a luxury good. If isolation really is a societywide crisis, we need society-wide solutions — and an understanding of who has been left out most acutely from what friendship promises.

In pursuit of that aim, the researchers Sam Pressler, a fellow at the University of Virginia's Karsh Institute of Democracy, and Soren Duggan, a communications strategist and Army veteran with a background in human intelligence collection, produced a report this spring titled "Nobody to Call," based on a series of 30 in-depth, qualitative interviews with men ranging from their mid-20s to their mid-40s without college degrees. They hoped to add texture to the conversation on loneliness by seeking out those who they believe are struggling the most. We've all experienced social atrophy, Mr. Pressler told me, but for men without degrees, the bottom has fallen out.

College completion rates have risen over the decades for both men and women, but a growing proportion of those who *aren't* graduating are men. As of 2021, men made up around 43 percent of four-year-college enrollees, down from approximately 57 percent in 1970. "As the college degree has increasingly become the great sorting function in American life," Mr. Pressler and Mr. Duggan wrote, "men without degrees have increasingly found themselves sorted out." We tend to talk about the loneliness crisis in terms of gender, but class, as derived from educational status, is the factor too touchy — or too invisible — to acknowledge.

Less than half of Americans hold bachelor's degrees, but those without are less likely to have places to gather (parks, libraries, even coffee shops), are less likely to join civic groups or social clubs and report having far fewer close friends or people to turn to for social support. The four-year degree isn't just an economic signal; it's become a lifestyle determinant.

Men without degrees are among the hardest hit by the loneliness epidemic.

In the "Nobody to Call" case studies and interview transcripts, men without college degrees described social drift that turns into a social cliff: Graduating from high school meant the loss of an accessible infrastructure for connection and, with it, a whittling down of peer groups and no new structure — college, the military, a union, churches or civic groups — to take its place.

And while higher education is often discussed in terms of its economic value, its relational value is strangely overlooked. The multiyear college experience brings together groups of peers who transition into adulthood together, often forming lasting bonds in the process and connecting to mentors and institutions along the way.

A majority of the men Mr. Pressler and Mr. Duggan interviewed were almost completely disconnected; of the 30, almost half reported having no close friends, and six reported having only one. In one of many poignant lines from the report, one interviewee said bluntly, "I don't have anybody that I feel like I matter to."

Friendships, purpose and opportunity are built over time, through institutions and shared settings. For many men, unstable work — transient gig jobs, uncontrollable schedules — allows only for the creation of tenuous, easily breakable ties. A lack of money, time and affordable places to gather adds to a lack of confidence and social know-how, making relationships harder to form or sustain. As one interviewee put it, "It is not community when you exclude people that don't have them jobs like you, the money like you or even look like you."

Most of the men interviewed as part of "Nobody to Call" seemed to deeply want to connect and contribute to their broader communities (contrary to the common public narrative of nihilistic, misogynistic loners actively contributing to a male loneliness crisis), but material barriers, compounding into psychological ones, often kept them from doing so.

Many admitted that although they wanted to build community and make friends, they had little sense of where to start. "I don't know how to just go out in the wild and pick up friends. People don't do as many in-person things as they used to many years ago."

But there are examples of civic leaders making it easier. For instance, as part of the 2026 FIFA World Cup celebrations, New York City's Office of the Mayor opened five public soccer pitches around the city for overnight pickup games — an initiative called NYC Open Play. It was free, available at nontraditional hours and staffed to encourage connection; thousands joined to play.

There are other brass-tacks policy changes that could help: ending just-in-time scheduling, providing more job support and protections for gig workers and putting in place better leave policies that might allow space for the development of one's civic life. But a major issue is simply being seen and understood — not as statistics or caricatures but as members of a shared community.

America is overdue for a reckoning with how we have made college the main rite of passage to cultural life while letting others atrophy. Potential solutions to this could be anything from more support for apprenticeships and vocational programs — ones that impart the sense of belonging that can be achieved only through the shared pursuit of excellence — to the dream of a national service corps that pools young people together across economic lines.

Like many of America's most pressing social crises, the loneliness epidemic is divided by class. The loneliness industry seeks to capitalize on the crisis of social isolation via paid solutions like those hawked to me online, but friendship as a pay-to-play luxury will continue to leave broad swaths of Americans out.

If loneliness really is a public health crisis, it's the responsibility of government and institutions, not just the market, to begin offering solutions. Connection is, or at least should be, a public good.

CHRISTINE EMBA *serves on the board of the American Institute for Boys and Men.*

The Houthis are showing their strength

STARK, FROM PAGE 1

the United States intervened.

The once localized war became a regional conflict and a devastating humanitarian crisis. Finally, facing a stalemate and significant international pressure, both sides agreed to a U.N.-brokered cease-fire in April 2022. By that point, the Houthis had created a de facto state in northern Yemen, while the weak Saudi-backed government nominally ruled parts of the south and west.

The Houthis flexed their muscles by attacking shipping vessels in the Red Sea early in the Israel-Gaza war that started in 2023. Using low-cost, low-tech equipment like one-way attack drones, missiles and unmanned surface vessels, the Houthis made the crossing more dangerous, driving up the cost of insuring commercial ships as much as twentyfold, effectively closing the strait. The only alternate route forced ships around the southern tip of the African continent, an extra 4,000 or more nautical miles, increasing shipping costs.

Last month, the Houthis resumed attacks on Red Sea shipping, striking Saudi-linked commercial oil tankers and hitting Saudi energy and transportation infrastructure. They were responding to what they claimed were Saudi airstrikes on Sanaa Airport's runway on July 13, seemingly in an effort to prevent an incoming Iranian flight from landing. For now, commercial ships continue to transit the Red Sea, although tanker traffic has declined substantially over the past month. Houthi attacks have also continued on ships the group claims are Saudi-aligned, and an attack on a cargo ship on Aug. 12 included the first reported fatalities of this latest round of attacks.

In recent days, the Houthis have claimed attacks on a ship in the Red Sea port of Mokha, which is held by forces allied with the internationally recognized government of Yemen, and on airports and oil refinery infrastructure in Saudi Arabia.

With the effective closure of Hormuz, the Red Sea-Suez route has become even more important. Most notably, Saudi Arabia had sought to avoid Hormuz by routing crude oil via a pipeline to the Red Sea port of Yanbu on its western coast. The new Houthi attacks have disrupted that option. The near closure of both Hormuz and the Suez routes could compound problems for global trade, pushing the cost of oil and inflation even higher.

Now the Houthis are positioned to step up their involvement in an already raging regional conflagration, complicating efforts to end it. Some may assume that this move is at the behest of Iran, but the reality is likely more complicated.

Highly attuned to their own interests and pragmatic in the international arena, the Houthis have proved savvy at choosing when to enter or escalate conflicts. When they attacked shipping in the Red Sea in 2023-25, for example, they said it was to pressure Israel to de-escalate its operations in Gaza. The strikes also bolstered their legitimacy in the territory they control in northern Yemen, diverting attention from their governance failures at a time when their popularity had eroded.

This time, the Houthis appear to see an opening to gain leverage in negotiations with Saudi Arabia to reach a political settlement in the Yemeni war — or an opportunity to resume attacks against the internationally backed government.

The previous round of Houthi attacks, in 2023-25, had a significant but ultimately manageable effect on the global economy. Estimates suggested that the ensuing shipping disruptions would have a small impact on inflation. The economic effects of closing the Bab al-Mandab Strait at the same time as Hormuz are likely to be more dire.

KHALED ZIAD/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE — GETTY IMAGES

A ship anchored in the Bab al-Mandab Strait. Last month, the Houthis resumed attacks on Red Sea shipping and in recent days claimed attacks on a ship in the port of Mokha.

While the United States looks to wind down the war with Iran, the Houthis are threatening to resume their war in Yemen, which would likely draw in Saudi Arabia, menace the global oil trade and keep the region unstable.

It will be difficult to de-escalate regional tensions without addressing the Houthis' threat directly, rather than assuming it can be resolved by dealing with their supposed boss, Iran. At the same time, no one should assume that a deal with Iran will bind what the Houthis do next. The international community should confront them as a pragmatic and dangerous actor making decisions in their own self-interest.

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ACPM **Printed in** Athens, Beijing, Beringen, Dubai, Frankfurt, Gallargues, Hong Kong, Islamabad, Karachi, Kathmandu, Kuala Lumpur, Lahore, London, Madrid, Milan, Nagoya, Osaka, Rome, Seoul, Taipei, Tel Aviv, Tokyo.
The New York Times Company 620 Eighth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10018-1405, NYTCo.com; The New York Times International Edition (ISSN: 2474-7149) is published six days per week. A.G. SULZBERGER, Publisher ©2026 The New York Times Company. All rights reserved. Commission Paritaire No. 0528 C83099.
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Regional Offices: U.K. 1 Bartholomew Close, 3rd Floor, London, EC1A 7BL; **Hong Kong** 1201 K.Wah Centre, 191 Java Road, North Point, Hong Kong; **France** 2, rue Favart, 75002 Paris, France. Printed in France by Midi Print ZAC du Pôle Actif. 18 Allée Piot 30660 Gallargues le Montueux.

Sports

The extraordinary fall and rise of Coventry City

Following a long period in the wilderness, it's back in the Premier League

BY OLIVER KAY
THE ATHLETIC

John Mullaney was on edge. It was Coventry City's day of reckoning and he was dreading it.

He had spent the morning feeling anxious, contemplating how relegation would feel after 34 years in the top flight — and at Villa Park of all places. He just wanted the whole ordeal over with, but his friend was late picking him up, compounding his agitation.

Feeling the need to do something, anything, to ease his nerves, the Coventry fan found a blue marker and scrawled the words "we'll be back" on a piece of paper. The sentiment smacked of resignation, but also of defiance — and a belief that relegation would be a mere blip before the team returned to the Premier League a year later.

For years, Coventry had lived a charmed life in the top flight, pulling off a few dramatic escapes on either side of a glorious F.A. Cup success in 1987. But by May 2001, making the short trip to Aston Villa for its penultimate game, it needed a minor miracle.

It nearly got one, rushing into a 2-0 lead, but a 3-2 defeat sent it back to the second tier for the first time since 1967. It was then that Mullaney whipped out his homemade poster and held it up.

Drowning his sorrows with friends in a pub near Villa Park an hour later, he was aghast to see that television cameras had picked out him and his poster.

He had not done it for attention. He had largely meant it as a message to the Villa fans he worked with who had been trash talking the week before.

"But also, I really believed we would come straight back up again," said Mullaney, now 69. "If you had told me it was going to take 25 years . . . "

Those 25 years brought three relegations, one administration and, worst of all, two periods of exile from the team's own city, forced to play home matches in Northampton and Birmingham because of a bitter rent dispute between the Coventry City Council, which partly owned the stadium, and SISU Capital, the hedge fund that bought the club in 2007.

For a time, Coventry became the ultimate illustration of English soccer's need for governance reform: playing in front of meager crowds 35 miles (56 kilometers) away in Northampton while its own stadium stood empty. A group of fans traveled to support the team not from the terraces but, by way of protest, from a hill overlooking Northampton's Sixfields ground. They were bleak times. "SISU nearly destroyed the club," Mullaney said.

And now, to a combination of joy and disbelief, Coventry City is back, under the owner Doug King and the leadership of the former Chelsea and England midfielder Frank Lampard. The team played the opening game of the new Premier League season, on Friday against Arsenal, though it lost, 3-0, to the defending champion.

Those years in the wilderness are behind the club, but they will not be forgotten easily by its supporters.

Mullaney grew up a corner kick away from Highfield Road, Coventry's home for 106 years. He remembers sneaking in to play on the pitch in the evenings — "with all the other ragamuffin kids all around the area" — sometimes joined by some of the club's apprentices, who lived at the end of the road. When the manager (and later chairman) Jimmy Hill rolled up in the parking lot, they would clean his car. The relationship between the soccer club and the community felt symbiotic.

"Growing up in the 1980s and 1990s, we were always in what is now the Premier League," said Dave Eyles, who was the chairman of the Sky Blue Trust, which formed in 2003 and led the protests against the club's owner during the years of exile. "We were never going to be as flush as the bigger clubs, but we won the F.A. Cup in 1987, and we always tried to compete. By the mid-1990s, we were operating beyond our financial capacity, and Highfield Road was looking a bit dilapidated, so there was talk of getting a new ground."

In 2005, five years behind schedule and four years after the jolt of relegation from the Premier League, Coventry moved to a new home, initially called the Ricoh Arena. As so often happens, the new stadium was portrayed as a symbol of a brighter future. The move was plagued by problems from the start. Coventry had been in debt for years, compounded by relegation and the collapse of the English Football League's commercial deal with ITV Digital, and made only a small contribution to the construction of the new stadium. Instead, it was funded almost entirely by the Coventry City Council and the Alan Edward Higgs Charity, which took ownership of the Ricoh Arena in a joint venture called Arena Coventry Limited.

Under the new arrangement, Coventry was a tenant, paying roughly 100,000 pounds a month in rent (about $180,000 in 2005), with no access to catering, parking or nonmatchday income.

Rather than move on to better things, Coventry drifted. The team stagnated, the surge in attendances didn't happen, and, by 2007, the club faced the threat of administration, at which point it was purchased by SISU Capital, a London hedge fund. This, too, was portrayed as a new start, a significant step toward a brighter future. Iain Dowie, the team's manager, spoke of "exciting times for everyone connected with the Sky Blues," saying the uncertainty was over.

"I was abroad at the time and I was cheering the news, thinking we had been saved," Eyles said, "only to realize we had actually done a deal with the devil."

In April 2012, Coventry was relegated again, dropping down to the third tier for the first time since 1964. But even more damaging was the rent dispute. SISU began to withhold rent payments in the hope of forcing a renegotiation. The stadium group offered reduced terms, but a standoff ensued.

In March 2013, days after the team's office staff was relocated from the stadium to the training ground and the club store was emptied of merchandise, Coventry entered administration, citing an inability to pay the outstanding £1.3 million rent bill. The threat of homelessness loomed, and shortly before the following campaign began, the club announced that it would play home games in Northampton for the next three seasons, a decision the E.F.L. approved with "deep regret."

"It was just awful," said Moz Baker, another former chairman of the Sky Blue Trust. "Nobody could quite believe it had happened."

Coventry's average league attendance had fallen from 21,302 in its first season at Ricoh Arena to 10,950 in Year 8 as disillusionment — and anger with the owner — grew. It then fell to just 2,348 as thousands of fans boycotted Northampton in protest. A small group of others watched from the hill, hoping the absurdity of the situation would draw attention to the club's plight.

Rather than move on to better things, Coventry drifted.

"I was one of the ones on the hill," Eyles said. "You weren't even watching the game because you could only see about half the pitch from the hill. You felt you were making a statement because it helped keep the club in the public eye, and the media coverage put some pressure on the owners to realize, 'Bloody hell, what have we done here?' But it was depressing."

An uneasy truce brought Coventry home the next season. But an opportunity to buy Ricoh Arena was missed. Instead, the stadium was sold to Wasps, a rugby union club with no previous link to the city.

Moreover, the damage done by the Northampton move was huge. The relationship between SISU and the fans was broken. There were regular protests demanding answers. "We just tried to get our message across: that football clubs don't belong to hedge funds or investors," Eyles said. "They belong to the fans. Without the fans, there is nothing."

Somehow, against that mutinous backdrop, a sense of stability arrived. Mullaney, Eyles and Baker all praised the influence of Manager Steven Pressley, in charge between 2013 and 2015, and his successor, Tony Mowbray, but particular acclaim is reserved for Mark Robins. He returned for a second spell in charge in March 2017, shortly before Coventry was relegated to the fourth tier. But victory over Oxford United at Wembley in the E.F.L. Trophy brought what Eyles called "a glimmer of hope," a hint of what could be achieved if the club's off-field issues could be resolved.

Robins led Coventry to promotion from League Two on the first attempt, beating Exeter City in the playoff final. "We took around 40,000 fans to Wembley that day, and the atmosphere was electric," Eyles said. "That was probably the point where it felt like we could get our club back."

The divide between the fan base and the owner was unbridgeable, but Robins strove to build a team that the city could get behind. Behind the scenes, a new chief executive, Dave Boddy, reached out to the fans, who previously felt that they had been treated as the enemy.

In 2019, with the Ricoh Arena dispute unresolved, Coventry was forced to relocate again to Birmingham City's stadium. The traveling distance was only 18 miles, but many fans stayed away in protest again. "At that point, it felt like there wasn't a way back to playing in Coventry," Eyles said.

Against the odds, Coventry won promotion back to the Championship in a season curtailed by the Covid-19 pandemic. In March 2021, the club agreed to a new 10-year rent deal to return to the Ricoh, which was renamed the Coventry Building Society Arena. Five months later, on the opening day of the new Championship season, a crowd of 20,843 watched Coventry, inspired by the new signing Viktor Gyokeres, come from behind to beat Nottingham Forest, 2-1.

A year later, SISU sold the club to King, who had made his fortune from commodity trading.

"There was a lot of skepticism because nobody knew who he was," Eyles said. "After years of SISU bringing different people on board, we worried he might be another stooge. But he quickly showed he had a very clear vision about wanting to take the club forward, back to the Premier League."

"We just tried to get our message across: that football clubs don't belong to hedge funds or investors."

Coventry narrowly missed out on promotion in 2023, beaten by Luton Town on penalties in the playoff final. The following season brought an agonizing defeat against Manchester United in the F.A. Cup semifinal, again on penalties. The dismissal of Robins in November 2024 upset many supporters. The appointment of Lampard, though a "big name," did little to placate them.

But Lampard brought fresh ideas and impetus. An impressive run took Coventry to the promotion playoffs, where it was beaten by Sunderland. Last season, the team was unstoppable, playing free-flowing, free-scoring soccer. Amid joyous scenes, Coventry won promotion with three games to spare. And on the day it lifted the trophy at CBS Arena, the club printed thousands of placards bearing the slogan "We are back," in Mullaney's writing.

Mullaney smiled as he watched it all more than 10,000 miles away in Brisbane, Australia. Since emigrating in 2006, he has followed Coventry's fortunes from afar, despairing at the trials and tribulations under SISU's ownership, feeling sorry for friends who were still following the team every week — even from a hill in Northampton.

But he has found his enthusiasm reignited over the past nine years, frequently getting up at 3 a.m. to watch his team, messaging his son in a state of excitement, "and then, when it's been a great game, struggling to get back to sleep because it's such a buzz."

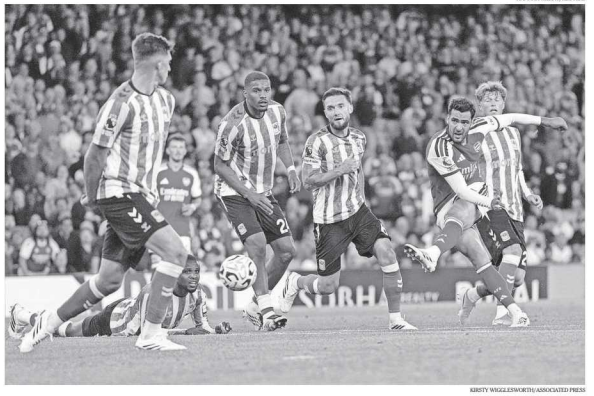
Fans can hardly believe the journey, from the Premier League all the way to League Two and then back again.

"I never thought we would get back there," Eyles said.

But now, Coventry finds itself back in its own city — not as tenants but finally as the owner of its own stadium, which the club bought in a £25 million deal last August — and back in the Premier League. Already this summer, it has spent more than £100 million on new players to strengthen Lampard's promotion-winning squad.

Even within the roller coaster existence of the Football League, it is remarkable to go from such depths of despair to such euphoria. Baker said the atmosphere in the city is unrecognizable. "It feels like everyone is wearing a Coventry shirt," he said. "There's a feel-good factor everywhere you go. Men, women, young and old, it has united the community again."

HANNAH MCKAY/REUTERS


KIRSTY WIGGLESWORTH/ASSOCIATED PRESS

Coventry City has returned to the English Premier League, 25 years after being relegated. "Growing up in the 1980s and 1990s, we were always in what is now the Premier League," said Dave Eyles, who led a supporters' group that protested against the club's owners. Clockwise from above: a parade in May celebrating the team's promotion; the team's first game of the new Premier League season, against Arsenal on Friday; and the team's crest.

ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE

R. VINER/DAILY EXPRESS, VIA GETTY IMAGES

JASON CAIRNDUFF/ACTION IMAGES, VIA REUTERS

HANNAH MCKAY/REUTERS

Above from left: Coventry City Manager Jimmy Hill signing autographs for young fans in 1967; Coventry City players celebrating after securing promotion to the Premier League, with three games to spare, in April; and a supporter at the team's parade in May.

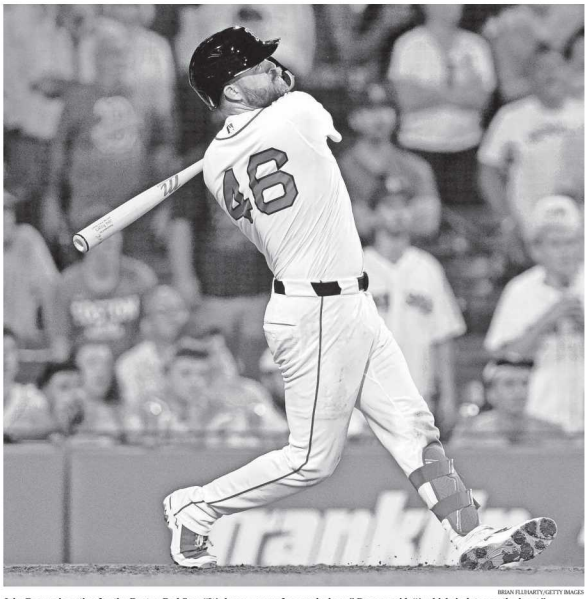
SPORTS

He played for four teams in 21 days

DETROIT

Jake Rogers has landed with the White Sox after a head-spinning few weeks

BY CODY STAVENHAGEN
THE ATHLETIC



BRIAN FLUHARTY/GETTY IMAGES

Jake Rogers in action for the Boston Red Sox. "It's been a crazy few weeks here," Rogers said. "A whirlwind, to say the least."

Catcher Jake Rogers has been a road warrior over the past three weeks in a way no Major League Baseball player ever has before. In a span of 21 days, Rogers suited up and played in games for four teams: the Detroit Tigers, Baltimore Orioles, Boston Red Sox and Chicago White Sox.

As Baseball Reference has unearthed, no player has bounced from team to team to team to team so quickly. Before Rogers, Frank Huelsman in 1904 held the record for the shortest period of time needed to appear in games for four separate teams. It took him 42 days, twice as long as Rogers.

"It's been a crazy few weeks here," Rogers said. "A whirlwind, to say the least."

So much about all this was odd, and so much of it highlighted the quirks only baseball can provide.

On July 30, the Tigers designated Rogers for assignment. The decision was not made lightly. Once a third-round draft pick in the Houston Astros system, Rogers joined the Tigers in the 2017 Justin Verlander trade. He spent the next nine years with the organization, debuting in 2019 and slowly emerging as a talented defender and unmatched clubhouse glue guy. He was known for his goofy mustaches. He pitched in blowout games and unleashed a nasty knuckleball. But he was hitting only .161 this season and playing sparingly behind Dillon Dingler.

It was late at night on July 29, after most of the clubhouse had cleared out, when Manager A.J. Hinch and the team's president of baseball operations, Scott Harris, told Rogers the news.

"It was a tough conversation," Rogers said. "Obviously, I spent most of my career here. It was a sore spot. I got to say goodbye to a few guys, but I got a lot of texts from guys the next day, which kind of makes it a little easier."

The Orioles happened to be in town and had interest in Rogers, who expected he would be claimed off waivers or traded before he cleared. Rogers caught a flight home to Dallas while he awaited word on his next stop. The Tigers waited until Baltimore left to trade Rogers in exchange for pitcher Zane Barnhart.

Rogers soon got on a plane to Baltimore. Next thing he knew, he was wearing an Orioles jersey and entering the eighth inning of a game against the Phillies.

"They were just like, 'Hey, we're excited to have you,'" Rogers said. "I figured I was going to be there."

By Aug. 3, it was the trade deadline, and the Red Sox needed catching help. They traded with the Orioles in a high-profile deal for Adley Rutschman. Rogers was included in the swap.

After a short flight to Boston, his first game with the Red Sox was against none other than his current employer, the White Sox. Rogers caught the last three innings of a 13-inning epic. He hit a sacrifice fly to help tie the game in the 12th inning.

In Boston, Rutschman started on the injured list, and as he neared activation, Rogers saw the writing on the wall. By Aug. 11, after all of nine plate appearances, the Red Sox activated Rutschman and sent Rogers back into designated for assignment purgatory.

The next team to come calling was the White Sox, who had a league-worst .518 on-base plus slugging percentage from their catchers this season. Rogers got the word on Aug. 14. He had already flown from Toronto with the Red Sox back to Dallas.

"A lot of flying around and a lot of mile-age points, for sure," he said.

Soon, he was on a plane back to Detroit, of all places, where the White Sox were playing a three-game weekend set against the Tigers with American League Central stakes.

"The craziest thing is trying to learn each guy's tendencies and what they like to throw," Rogers said. "You can look at it on paper, but it means more coming from the guys and catching them one or two times to learn it. It's been a school of hard knocks situation, but we're making our way through it."

For his first at-bat, fans at Comerica Park in Detroit gave him a standing ovation. The Tigers' starter, Troy Melton, backed off the rubber. Over the public-address system, they even played Rogers's old walk-up song — the Garth Brooks ballad "Friends in Low Places."

"He obviously meant a lot to everybody in this locker room," Melton said.

Rogers proceeded to bunt into a rare 1-5-4 double play, but his new team still went on to beat his old one. Rogers has now experienced a bundle of different clubhouses, from the Tigers, who have underachieved but fought to keep their season afloat, to a scuffling Orioles squad to a red-hot Red Sox team.

Now in Chicago, he is part of an unexpected division leader. With White Sox catcher Kyle Teel working his way back from an ankle sprain, there is no guarantee Rogers will be with the White Sox for the rest of the year. Such is the life of a journeyman catcher. But he became an unlikely hero on Friday night when he hit a walk-off homer in the bottom of the ninth inning to help the White Sox beat the New York Mets, 6-4.

On most mornings as a Tiger, Rogers sat at his locker and filled out the Immaculate Grid — the Baseball Reference game that involves matching athletes to teams and statistical criteria.

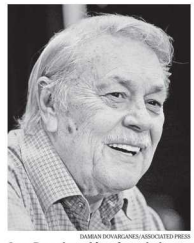
As a personal challenge, Rogers liked to attempt to fill out the grid using only catchers.

Over the past three weeks, one name just became much more valuable on the Grid. His own.

Lakers power struggle is a bitter family feud

Commentary

BY JASON LLOYD
THE ATHLETIC



DAMIAN DOVARGANES/ASSOCIATED PRESS

Jerry Buss planned for a future he knew he ultimately would be unable to control.

Jerry Buss wanted his children to run the Lakers after he was gone. How sad he would be to see what his prized possession has done to the people he cherished. The Lakers were supposed to be the bond that kept the Buss family connected after his passing. Instead, the team is the wedge splitting everyone apart.

Five siblings against one. Public accusations. Old wounds made new. Attorneys on both sides profiting off the dysfunction.

It is a real-life "Succession" playing out in Hollywood; the Roy family, cloaked in purple and gold, six heirs to a kingdom fighting over the throne. It is messy and uncomfortable. It is also impossible to look away.

It's tempting to dismiss any sympathy for a family bickering over billions. Nobody here is going hungry. Nobody is wondering if the mortgage check will clear this month. That isn't the tragedy. The tragedy is that a father planned for every legal and financial threat to his life's work except the one that mattered most: what it might do to his children.

Five of the six Buss siblings want to sell the family trust's remaining 17.8 percent stake, while Jeanie Buss wants to preserve enough ownership to remain the Lakers' governor. She believes that the trust's language and a 2017 court order give her the ability to block the sale. Ultimately, the courts will most likely decide the winner.

Jerry Buss did the best he could, planning for a future he knew he ultimately could not control. He built a succession plan in three layers: collective family ownership, Jeanie as the ultimate authority and operational roles for the other children.

He divided ownership equally without dividing authority equally. All six children had the same economic interest and a voice in major ownership decisions, but Jerry did not intend for all six to run the Lakers simultaneously. Jeanie was the designated controlling owner.

The intent was most likely to keep ownership from getting fragmented across potential spouses, grandchildren and subsequent generations. Instead, it has created a perverse incentive for the siblings to sell. Cash out now, enjoy your wealth, and leave your inheritance to those of your own choosing. Die while the shares remain in the trust, and your siblings get everything.

By structuring the trust the way he did, Buss incentivized the very sale he was trying so carefully to prevent.

For five of the Buss siblings, selling the remaining stake can be viewed as the logical conclusion of a process that began when the family surrendered control of the Lakers last year. They can take their money and move forward with lives that no longer revolve around the franchise.

For Jeanie Buss, it doesn't seem nearly that simple.

Her five siblings can sell and walk away. She may view walking away as losing something that cannot be replaced by any amount deposited into a bank account.

The Lakers are not merely what she owns. They seem to be her identity.

Jeanie Buss was 19 when her father put her in charge of his professional tennis team. She later ran the Forum and spent decades working within the family businesses before ultimately assuming control of the Lakers.

It's tempting to dismiss any sympathy for a family bickering over billions.

She is 64 now. Her entire adult life has been attached to her father's sports empire and, ultimately, to the Lakers. All of that raises a question that is impossible for any of us to answer but appears increasingly unavoidable: Does Jeanie Buss know who Jeanie Buss is without the Los Angeles Lakers?

Her agreement allows her to remain Lakers governor through 2030. Eventually, Jeanie will have to find a life without the Lakers. For now, she is clinging to what remains of the only life she has ever known.

Families battle over inheritances every day. Siblings argue about what their parents wanted done with the house or intended for the business. Old resentments surface. One child believes another was favored. Someone wants to sell. Someone else refuses.

The Buss family is having an ordinary family dispute on an extraordinarily large stage. They are having it over the Los Angeles Lakers.

The Mini Crossword

8/24/2026

BY SAM EZERSKY
EDITED BY JOEL FAGLIANO

ACROSS

1 Animal that appears orange to human eyes, but as a camouflaged green to deer
6 Get a smile or laugh from
7 Business with multiple locations
8 Dating app with a curvy "H" logo
9 "At the ___, please record your message ..."

DOWN

1 Dashboard gauge, for short
2 Dramatic cry in a game of paintball
3 Fertilizer obtained from bats
4 Add one's name to, as a PDF document
5 Actress Zellweger

ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE

D	I	V	E	S
O	R	I	G	A
H	A	N	G	M
		Y	U	M
M	A	J	O	R
E	Y	E	L	A
W	E	T	K	I

I
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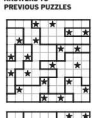
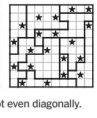
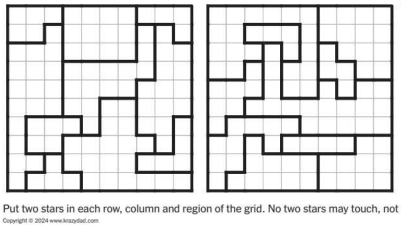
Two Not Touch

ANSWERS TO PREVIOUS PUZZLES







Put two stars in each row, column and region of the grid. No two stars may touch, not even diagonally.

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Brain Tickler

Change one letter in each word to make a new set of related words. The new letters in order from left to right will identify the words' connection.

TRIBUTE GLOBS NETS BUN MOST STIR DRESS LODGER WOULD

PUZZLE BY WILL SHORTZ

SATURDAY'S ANSWER Spate, tapes, pâtés, paste

KenKen

ANSWERS TO PREVIOUS PUZZLES

3	1	4	2
1	4	2	3
2	3	1	4
4	2	3	1

2	3	6	5	1	4
6	2	5	1	4	3
1	6	3	4	5	2
5	4	2	3	6	1
3	1	4	6	2	5
4	5	1	2	3	6

Fill the grid with digits so as not to repeat a digit in any row or column, and so that the digits within each heavily outlined box will produce the target number shown, by using addition, subtraction, multiplication or division, as indicated in the box. A 4x4 grid will use the digits 1-4. A 6x6 grid will use 1-6.

For more games: www.nytimes.com/games

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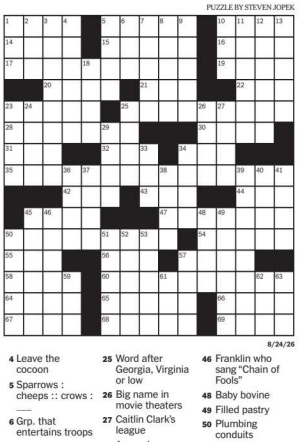
Crossword | Edited by Will Shortz

PUZZLE BY STEVEN JOPEK



8/24/26

ACROSS

1 Apex
5 Curry ingredient
10 Hay unit
14 Robert Frost creation
15 Grilled, at a taqueria
16 Mined metals
17 Criminals' sphere
19 Have a hankering for
20 Floral Van Gogh subject
21 Latin gods
22 Enemy
23 End of the Greek alphabet
25 Tsunami
28 Common motive in a murder case
30 Follower of latch or catch
31 Nashville honor, briefly
32 Oft-torn knee part, in brief
34 Confederate soldier, informally
35 Any foreseeable difficulty ... with a hint to 17-, 25-, 50- and 60-Across
42 Clerical vestment
43 Writer Edgar Allan ___
44 She, in Portuguese
45 Zing ___ (brand of Bloody Mary mix)
47 Zoomed past
50 Stop in the afterlife
54 Fill in for
55 Fury
56 Source of fleece
57 Jazz great Fitzgerald
58 White part of an orange
60 Natural wonder in Venezuela
64 Sound in a cavernous empty room
65 Arctic creatures with flippers
66 International retailer with a three-syllable name
67 Dance whose name is also a hairstyle
68 Golfer Els
69 Letters on an invitation

DOWN

1 Storekeeper on "The Simpsons"
2 Trick
3 Like the period known as the Middle Ages
4 Leave the cocoon
5 Sparrows : cheeps :: crows : ___
6 Grp. that entertains troops
7 Tuesday, in Lyon
8 Sat at a red light
9 Gymnast Comaneci
10 Cousin of a curtsy
11 Yasir of the P.L.O.
12 Chinese computer giant
13 Lauder of cosmetics
18 "Knives Out" director Johnson
23 Philharmonic grp.
24 Many a viral post
25 Word after Georgia, Virginia or low
26 Big name in movie theaters
27 Caitlin Clark's league
29 Apparel
33 Place for gloss
34 Actress Perlman of "Cheers"
36 "Auld ___ Syne"
37 "Three Sisters" sister
38 Like many horror flicks
39 Presentations with an 18-minute limit
40 Actor Idris
41 Tampa Bay players
45 Financial center of Switzerland
46 Franklin who sang "Chain of Fools"
48 Baby bovine
49 Filled pastry
50 Plumbing conduits
51 Needle mischievously
52 Renter's counterpart
53 Daughter of King Lear
57 Coder's counterpart to "if"
59 Non-sharer
61 One of football's Mannings
62 "The Magicians" novelist Grossman
63 Maple syrup base

ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE

R	A	B	B	I	T	S	T	E	W	■	E	Y	E	S
A	N	Y	O	N	E	H	O	M	E	■	R	E	A	L
I	N	E	X	T	R	E	M	I	S	■	E	S	T	A
N	O	S	P	O	I	L	E	R	S	■	A	N	E	W
■	■	■	L	U	G	■	S	O	L	D	O	N	■	■
B	I	F	O	C	A	L	S	■	N	E	E	D	■	■
B	R	E	T	H	R	E	N	■	G	R	O	S	S	■
Q	A	T	■	R	O	U	T	E	■	U	H	H	■	■
S	N	A	R	K	■	C	O	L	U	M	B	I	A	■
■	■	C	O	I	L	■	K	E	E	P	I	T	P	G
■	S	H	A	D	O	W	■	M	S	N	■	■	■	■
O	P	E	D	■	W	H	I	T	E	T	I	G	E	R
D	R	E	W	■	B	A	N	A	N	A	C	A	K	E
D	E	S	I	■	I	M	O	U	T	R	A	G	E	D
S	E	E	N	■	D	O	N	T	S	T	R	E	S	S

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Culture

Can you hear the theaters ka-ching?

IVINS, UTAH

Many U.S. venues are able to mount 'Les Misérables' now that a tour is over

BY MICHAEL PAULSON
AND ROGER KISBY

Right from the start, it is clear the production of "Les Misérables" unfolding in an amphitheater at the mouth of a Utah canyon is going to be distinctive.

It begins with prisoners busting rocks in an oppressively hot desert, dwarfed by 1,500-foot-high red-rock cliffs just behind them. Javert, the merciless officer who is the show's deep-voiced villain, makes his entrance astride a tall black Clydesdale, its long tail flicking in the sand. There are live goats, blank-firing guns and, by the time Javert sings "Stars," the wonder of dark sky, twinkling overhead.

It is so hot in southern Utah at this time of year that the three-hour show does not start until 8:45 p.m., about half of the 40 performers wear ice packs under their costumes, and numerous patrons sport portable neck fans. Neither the temperature nor the occasional tarantula seems to be much of a deterrent. On a recent 102-degree day — it was only 95 degrees by curtain — 2,300 people showed up.

The folks who run the Tuacahn Center for the Arts, the largest nonprofit professional theater in Utah, chose to stage "Les Miz" this year because they love the show — the music, the message, the melodrama. But they also knew it would sell tickets. The production is tracking to be the highest-grossing in Tuacahn's 31-year history.

A surge in productions of "Les Misérables" is unfolding across North America because of a rare confluence of opportunity and need. A long-running tour has just ended, making the show available for licensing by others. And many regional theaters are in difficult financial straits, creating hunger for titles likely to attract ticket buyers.

"It's so popular and so well-loved that I think, from a business standpoint, it's an instant moneymaker," said Randal Keith, the veteran "Les Miz" actor playing Javert at Tuacahn after more than 2,900 performances as the protagonist, Jean Valjean, on tour and on Broadway. "People can see it 20 times and find something new."

"Les Misérables," based on the 1862 novel by Victor Hugo, is an epic story, set against the backdrop of a brief anti-monarchist rebellion that was quashed in France in 1832.

The show, first produced in France, opened in London in 1985 and is still running there; the original Broadway production, which ran from 1987 to 2003 and won the best musical Tony Award, remains the sixth-longest running show in Broadway history. The musical has been performed in 57 countries and 22 languages and has been seen by over 150 million people. There was also a starry film adaptation in 2012.

The latest national tour — President Trump, a fan of the show, saw a performance at the Kennedy Center — ended in June. Music Theater International, the company that licenses "Les Miz," says it has already given permission for 107 new productions, about half of which are at professional regional theaters.

"This is one of the most popular musicals ever, and the regional theaters, and the great amateur companies, need to produce this work," said Cameron Mackintosh, the British megaproducer who has been overseeing the extensive global life of "Les Miz" since the 1980s, when he produced the first English-language production in collaboration with the Royal Shakespeare Company. "There's a huge pent-up demand."

Like most big Broadway musicals and plays, "Les Miz" severely restricts licensing while a commercial production is touring to prevent cannibalizing the audience. There are exceptions: "Les Miz" has long allowed student productions even when a tour is running.

Now the floodgates are open. This year, professional productions are scheduled not only in Utah, but also in Arizona, California, Colorado, Georgia (twice), Illinois, Kansas, Kentucky and Maryland. In New York, one production began on Aug. 12 at Hudson Valley Shakespeare and another starts Nov. 27 at Syracuse Stage.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ROGER KISBY

"It's so popular and so well-loved that I think, from a business standpoint, it's an instant moneymaker."

"It's certainly a big show, in terms of its cast size and its full and operatic orchestration, so it's a big swing for nonprofit theaters," said Davis McCallum, the artistic director of Hudson Valley Shakespeare. "But it also pulls a lot of people into the theater who might not otherwise be inclined to go, and as theaters make the case for our continuing relevance and excitement, 'Les Miz' makes that case strongly."

Next year, there are many more productions scheduled, from Texas to Maine and from Florida to British Columbia. Mackintosh said he expected the show to return to New York City the following year, although he was not ready to share details other than to say it was not his production.

Many of the nonprofit theaters planning "Les Miz" productions say they have been waiting for years to develop their own takes on the material, which was written by Claude-Michel Schönberg, Alain Boublil and Herbert Kretzmer.

"We've never done it because the rights have never been available to us," said Jason Loewith, the artistic director of the Olney Theater Center in Maryland, which plans to stage the show for the first time this year.

Loewith said the show was not only a fan favorite, but also a bucket list show for many performers. "We had more than 400 local submissions from actors wanting to do this show — we had to turn people away from auditions — which tells me these are roles people are desperate to play, and they've never had a chance," Loewith said.

Utah is a prime example of "Les Miz" fever. The Tuacahn Center for the Arts and its audience are familiar with the title — the theater had staged a less elaborate version in 2008 to great success — and the nonprofit's administrators were confident in its ongoing appeal.

The theater runs three shows in repertory each year and expects to draw 360,000 patrons this season; its production of "Les Miz" started in May and runs through October.

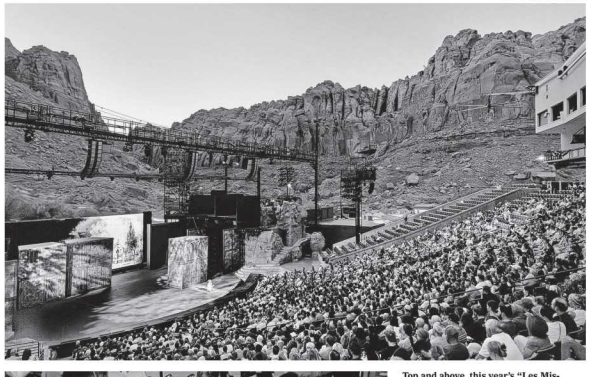
The audience on the night this reporter attended included a woman in a 24601 T-shirt — that's Jean Valjean's prisoner number — and a man wearing a hat with the show's Broadway logo. Suzanne Smith was there for the 14th time this season; she had been introduced to "Les Miz" at Tuacahn in 2008, saw the show about 15 times that season, and has since seen it in New York and in London. "Something stirred in my soul," she said, "and I thought, 'I've got to see it again. And again. And again.'"

Her love for the show has also nurtured her love for the theater — she brings her children and grandchildren, and she is now, with her husband, a major donor.

"I just love the act of kindness that was shown to Jean Valjean, and how it profoundly changed his life," she said, "and I just thought, 'That could still go on today.'"

Tuacahn, which is in Ivins, just northwest of St. George, started producing in 1995, and spent its first few years with a single show, "Utah," about local history. But in 1999 it began staging its own productions of Broadway titles — which it deemed necessary for survival — and its resources, professionalism and audience have been growing since.

The theater was seeded with $30 million in gifts from Hyrum and Gail Smith; Hyrum Smith had founded one of the companies that became FranklinCovey. Gail Smith still remembers hiking through the canyon in the early 1990s and marveling at the acoustics of a natural amphitheater. She said the expected success of "Les Miz" would help ensure the theater's continuity.



Top and above, this year's "Les Misérables" at the Tuacahn Center for the Arts in Utah is tracking to be the highest-grossing show in its history.

"I usually try to get a seat in Row H so I can turn around and see the people with tears in their eyes, or with joy and laughing and so happy," she said. "And I say, 'That's it: You're making people happy, you're serving people, you're teaching people values from the shows that they're watching.' That's what's important."

The company's annual budget is $26 million, up from $1.5 million two decades ago. It is now a major economic driver in the tourism-dependent region of southern Utah, home to Zion National Park.

Production costs, though, are up over 50 percent since the coronavirus pandemic. This year's "Les Miz" production is costing Tuacahn about $4 million to stage, up from $1.5 million in 2008. The theater expects to sell about $6.5 million worth of tickets, which range from $36 to $142.

"Six years ago, we could pay our box office $10 an hour to start, and now, if you're not starting at $15 or $16, they'll go work at In-N-Out Burger," said Kevin Smith, the theater's chief executive and a nephew of Hyrum and Gail Smith.

About 90 percent of the theater's revenue comes from patrons — through ticket sales, concessions and the gift shop — and 10 percent comes from philanthropy. Administrators are mindful of affordability concerns, which means they need to continually raise more from donors.

Above, an understudy watching video from a past performance. Below, mannequin heads holding wigs backstage. Bottom left, a cast member signing an autograph after the show.

"What we have to do is find a way to serve our community without increasing our prices to the point that nobody wants to come," said Jonathan O. Hafen, the chairman of the Tuacahn board.

Hafen said there were moments over the past few decades when he was not sure the theater would survive. But the theater is now stable — in better shape than many of its peers — and confident that "Les Miz" will strengthen its position.

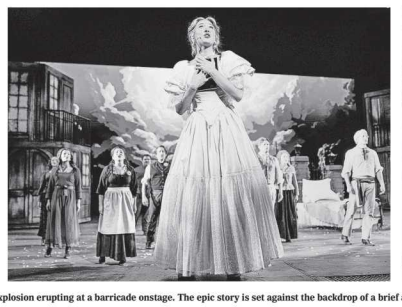
"We have a great location, we have a committed group on our board, and people just love coming and seeing shows here, so I think we're going to be fine," said Hafen, whose grandfather once owned the land in Padre Canyon that is now the site of the theater. "But if we just kept doing the same thing the same way, we wouldn't be fine — we've had to innovate, we've had to build out our development team, anticipating the cost increases to make sure we can be successful."

The company focuses on family-friendly shows — a significant percentage of Utahns are members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints — so there are no performances on Sundays and the organization keeps a close eye on sex and swearing in its scripts. Each season, the theater has had to cancel a handful of performances because of heavy rain, high winds or poor air quality from wildfire smoke.

Last year, the theater staged "Newsies," "The Little Mermaid" and "The Wizard of Oz," and sales were so-so. "Great shows, great productions, but it just didn't sell like we were hoping," said Gary Cahoon, the chief financial officer, "and we actually went backward a little bit."

About 80 percent of the audience at Tuacahn is from Utah, and another 10 percent from Nevada; more than 30,000 people each season come from elsewhere in the United States and other countries.

"We have a lot people that love theater here," said Scott S. Anderson, the producing artistic director. "We also have a lot of people who can't afford to take trips to New York and see Broadway. And what we like to say is, 'We're bringing Broadway to you, in a place that is truly unbelievable.'"



From left: David Toole portraying Jean Valjean; Rachel Schoenecker as Cosette; and an explosion erupting at a barricade onstage. The epic story is set against the backdrop of a brief anti-monarchist rebellion in 19th-century France.

CULTURE

LLOYD BISHOP/NBC, VIA GETTY IMAGES

Hannah Berner, a comedian and the co-host of the podcast "Giggly Squad," received an injectable medical treatment in her jaw that left her unable to smile. She has since learned that the effects can take up to six months to wear off.

Injections froze her smile but not her wit

The comic Hannah Berner can still joke about a health procedure that went awry

BY SHIVANI GONZALEZ

Hannah Berner has made a career out of laughing on her podcast "Giggly Squad" and making others laugh with her stand-up comedy.

But this summer, she had to answer the question: What happens when your job is to smile but you literally can't?

On her podcast, which she hosts with her bestie and fellow former Bravo celebrity Paige DeSorbo, Berner called an "emergency news conference" this summer to discuss what she called "smilegate" and, later, the "masseter massacre." She told the listeners, whom she and DeSorbo call "the gigglers," that she got an injectable treatment in her jaw that had gone severely awry.

She had received the injections before to alleviate symptoms of TMJ — a condition that can cause jaw tightness, pain and headaches — which she has dealt with since childhood. This time, she went to a new office to receive Dysport, an injectable similar to Botox that smooths wrinkles but is sometimes used off label to treat TMJ symptoms. She quickly felt a stiffness she had not experienced before: "Smiling felt like weight lifting," she recalled. Four days later, she was unable to smile or speak clearly.

HANNAH BERNER

"Right before everything went down, I was bragging on my podcast about how your 30s are so great, because every possible bad thing that can happen to you happens in your 20s," Berner, 35, said in an interview with The New York Times. "And by your 30s, you're like, I can handle anything — and then this happened."

Berner didn't initially want to share the mishap with the public, because she was worried it would affect upcoming career opportunities.

"My worst nightmare is hurting my own podcast because I'm an idiot who got something done on her face that was not necessary," she said. She was preparing to film reshoots for a movie project and also to host a show. But when she noticed her face wasn't getting better, she decided it was time to open up.

About two weeks after the injections, at the end of June, Berner shared her newly stiff smile on her podcast. At that point it looked like the grimace emoji. People in the comments quickly likened her smile to that of Donkey in "Shrek" and the Chloe in the car seat meme. Most viewers said they were laughing hysterically, and a few said they had experienced similar situations and offered tips.

Berner told audiences that she should have done more research before trying out a new place. "I didn't even know this could happen," she said into the microphone. "Oh my god, is it possible that the poison that was injected in my face is now going to ruin my face?" As Berner was describing her predicament, DeSorbo giggled uncontrollably.

And then, after seeing how "the gigglers" were laughing right alongside her, Berner decided to make the most of it. "I didn't think people would think it was as funny as they do — people are like, This is the funniest thing she's ever done. I'm like: Guys, I have two specials. I put a lot of work into them."

She even heard from the skin care brand CeraVe, which she said sent her a lip balm with the message "Just because you don't have a smile doesn't mean you can't have beautiful hydrated lips."

"I'm so happy that it was making people laugh because I was disturbed," Berner reflected. "Like, I was upset. I had jobs on the line."

The situation also led Berner to reflect on how women are expected to present themselves in the world. She said she realized she was often smiling more than necessary in meetings.

"I do smile a lot — and not that it's bad — but I think there's situations where I learned you actually don't have to smile and you could just sit in a moment," she said.

"I didn't think people would think it was as funny as they do — people are like, This is the funniest thing she's ever done."

Additionally, Berner's inability to make some of her natural expressions has made her want to caution people, especially younger women, to think twice before trying procedures on their faces.

"I am one of those people who's excited to age looking like myself, so this was a good learning lesson to treat your face with love," she said.

And how is Berner's smile doing now? Despite trying treatments she hoped might loosen the muscles again — including saunas, microcurrent therapy, lymphatic drainage massages, red-light therapy, acupuncture and exercise — she has learned that there is no quick fix, and that the effects can take up to six months to wear off.

"It is getting better, but at the end of the day Botox zaps your nerve endings and saunas can only help so much," she said. "My husband told me to stop counting, but I'm hitting Day, like, 55, I believe."

Now that Berner has been able to laugh off the whole situation — well, in a way — with her fans, she joked that she was a bit sad her smile was starting to return.

"The fact that the whole community came together to be like 'This is the funniest thing' made me remember why I do comedy, which is to be vulnerable about what you're going through and make other people feel less bad about the stuff they're going through," she said.

She added, "People are commenting, 'Oh no, it's getting better — she needs a top off!'"

Alone in her trauma

BOOK REVIEW

Dèy
By Edwidge Danticat. *Knopf. 256 pp. $30.*

BY IMBOLO MBUE

To live in 21st-century America is to accept that violence might find you on any ordinary day. I was sitting on the New York City subway recently when a young man walked up to me, balled up his fist and swung at my face. An inch away from punching me, he stopped, lowered his fist. "See how easy it is?" he said, looking me in the eye, certainly seeing my utter fright. Easy to do what? I thought. To injure? To kill? To cause fear for no reason at all? At the next stop, the other passengers and I rushed into a different car, and only then did we give one another that look of, What just happened?

Most of us would rather not consider just how "easy" it is for a random act to upend our sense of safety, if not our entire lives. That is certainly the case for Magnolia, the protagonist of Edwidge Danticat's heartfelt new novel, "Dèy." She's in a Miami mall buying a cellphone for her daughter when a mass shooter sends the whole place into lockdown, and she finds herself curled up on a restaurant floor alongside dozens of strangers.

She survives, yes, but what does survival mean when her shock and distress are so intense she can't even tell her loved ones? And how is she to make sense of a world where such dangers lurk around every corner? "You have to watch yourself everywhere you go these days," one character says after finding out about the incident. "I mean, my God, the same things people are leaving other countries for are happening to them here."

ILLUSTRATION BY ROCHE CRUCHON

After raising Magnolia in Brooklyn, her parents moved back to Haiti in search of "community support" and "spiritual healing" for her ailing mother. Finding neither, they now wrestle with the challenges of living in a society perpetually on the brink, lost to murderous gangs and political corruption.

What, in effect, separates the violence in Haiti from that in America? Magnolia attends a funeral for one of the victims of the mall shooting, where politicians make a show of promising gun reform. But how different are they, really, from the Haitian elites who distribute smuggled American guns to young gang members so they can "sow chaos," which is "how the rich and powerful make obscene amounts of money and hold on to unchecked power?"

The novelist's duty is to present such questions and then leave the room — to grant the reader space to ponder them. Danticat does this masterfully, particularly regarding the subjects of love and home. Magnolia loves and is loved by many — including her 10-year-old daughter and her daughter's father, whom Magnolia is recently separated from but who remains unwilling to let her go — and yet she is alone in her trauma.

Even when she finally attempts to talk about the shooting, weeks later, she struggles to do so. "The words won't come, not in my mouth, not in my mind," Danticat writes. "I try to convince myself that I wasn't there, that I'm just following the story from a distance. But I was there." Too afraid to return to the mall to buy decorations for her daughter's birthday, she goes to a party supply store, where "my lungs seize and I feel out of breath," eyeing her fellow shoppers "for bulges that could be weapons."

Homes — and homelands — are meant to be safe places, and yet they can turn unsafe, or be lost altogether. As a real estate agent, Magnolia helps clients part with homes they no longer want, providing emotional support when their "sorrow and anger surface in unexpected ways, heartache disguised as irritation at the finality of letting go." Similarly, Magnolia's parents and extended family have difficulty letting go of the Haiti that is rapidly slipping away from them.

Like Danticat's exceptional 2007 memoir, "Brother, I'm Dying," about her beloved uncle who fled Haiti only to meet a tragic end in the United States, "Dèy" is a love song and an elegy for the Haitian diaspora. It sparkles with adoration for the melodic Kreyòl language, for the celebrations that take place in Miami's Little Haiti, which can be "packed with hundreds of revelers dancing and singing along to their favorite konpa band."

It is a testament to their strong cultural bonds that Magnolia's extended family stays united through geographical separation, mental illness, infidelity, lost dreams, tragedy. Despite its title — the Kreyòl word for mourning — there is hope, however faint, in this tender novel.

Imbolo Mbue is the author of "Behold the Dreamers" and "How Beautiful We Were." Her next novel, "Every Story Is a Love Story," will be published in October.

TRAVEL

Rafting a river in flux through the Grand Canyon

Dwindling water levels caused by climate change make the trip feel precious

BY HEATHER HANSMAN

They call it the horizon line, the point on a river where the water disappears over the drop of a rapid and you can't see what's coming next. Once you pass it, you're committed to the force of the water.

I felt that force above Badger Creek Rapid, the first major white water on the Colorado River in the Grand Canyon. The walls of the canyon pinched in and the river sped up, pulling us toward the horizon line. Our boat tipped over the edge, rushing into the waves and then we crashed through the rapids, immersed in the canyon.

I'd been chasing that feeling since I was 18, when I started working as a river guide on cold, clear rivers in Maine, far from the desert depths of the Grand Canyon. For over two decades, I'd held up the Grand Canyon as the ultimate river trip: the longest, the biggest rapids, the most stunning canyon, the start of so many river stories. And now, I was finally getting my chance.

I was on the river last summer tracking down one of those stories for a book about underappreciated female adventurers. I was in search of the tale of Georgie White, who was one of the first people to raft the Grand Canyon and was the only female river guide for decades.

She spearheaded a lot of what we now think of as tourism and adventure travel by being one of the first people to run rubber rafts and motor rigs on the Colorado. She made movies about the canyon. She insisted on new permitting rules to protect the landscape and protested dams. She only wore leopard print, was known for wrestling National Park Service rangers and brought more people down the Grand Canyon than anyone, because she thought the best way to love the canyon was from the river itself. She never wanted to be anywhere else.

The Colorado runs between two dams, which contain the two biggest U.S. reservoirs. Lake Powell, upstream of the canyon, and Lake Mead, downstream, both now have historically low water levels — less comes in because of drought and too much goes out because of rising demand from ecosystems, municipalities, agriculture and more. On Aug. 15, the water in Lake Powell fell to its lowest level ever, according to the Bureau of Reclamation, the federal agency that manages the reservoirs; earlier in the month, Lake Mead had hit its lowest level ever.

The falling water levels have been worsened by climate change. The Southwest of the United States has been getting hotter and drier over the past three decades, research has shown, in a "megadrought" not seen in at least 1,200 years.

And if less water flows through it, the canyon and the vast life it contains would be fundamentally changed. The future might look very different on the Colorado. That was part of why it felt important to be out there.

SURPRISES IN THE CANYON

In the early days of river running, when Georgie was starting out, there were no maps of the river. Boaters didn't know when they'd hit white water, or where to find the best camps.

It turns out that on America's standout white water river trip, much of the river isn't white water. The canyon spans 277 river miles (446 kilometers) and while there are more than 100 significant rapids, some 260 miles are flat water. There's time to loosen your grip and look around. Over the trip, the Colorado River is less of a roller coaster and more of a conveyor belt, slowly giving up its secrets.

I was on a commercial trip with OARS, one of the longest-standing rafting companies. The guides with us seemed to know every detail. They pointed out endangered condors in the crossbars of Navajo Bridge, the last bit of civilization we would see for 16 days, and they showed us granaries hidden in the cliffs. They pointed to places where the canyon could still be developed and explained the threat of proposed mines. At night in camp, they told us ghost stories and tales of flipped rafts and unlikely adventurers.

On the fourth day, with the afternoon light getting low, we stopped at the confluence between the main Colorado and the Little Colorado River, which runs down from Arizona's White Mountains. It was a shocking shade of teal, thanks to a high concentration of calcium carbonate, which coats the ruddy rocks and the shoreline with a slippery talc-like layer.

The inflow from the Little Colorado is ecologically significant: The area where the rivers join is home to one of the last viable populations of the endangered humpback chub, a native fish. Crucially, it's also sacred for 11 Indigenous tribes including the Hopi and Navajo, whose historic homelands include the Little Colorado, and who have been fighting for decades for their right to the river and to their most important religious sites. The Hopi believe life started at a spring near the Little Colorado confluence that they call the Sipapu, and being around the stream felt reverent.

One morning 100 miles in, we pulled the boats over at Shinumo Creek, which seemed like a nondescript side stream. After a few minutes hiking up the creek, we found a clear green waterfall, an oasis entirely unlike the desert river we'd been on. There were monkey flowers and maidenhair ferns growing in the seeps along the grotto walls, and when I dove under the falls, I felt something nibbling my toes. One of the guides told me it was likely some of those tiny fish.

I was in search of the tale of Georgie White, the only female river guide for decades.

The Canyon holds so much history: Native American origin stories and tales of Spanish conquistadors who said the canyon was unnavigable in 1540.

I could feel the layers of time, and that was without even considering the physical history of the canyon, where the basement rocks deep in the gorge are 1.8 billion years old.

THE FINAL RAPIDS

The Grand Canyon is both deeply untamed and heavily controlled.

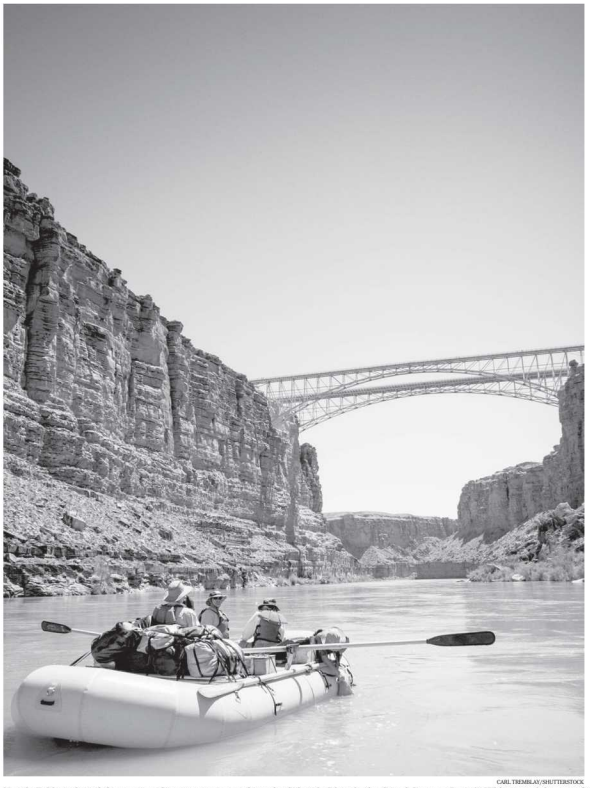
Every day we could feel the river change based on demand upstream at the power plant at the base of Lake Powell. Some mornings the boats floated higher as more water was released to create power, while other days there was more beach. "Guess they're running the A.C. in Phoenix," we joked when the water surged.

I realized that what I really wanted to experience was to feel the river changing, the experience of being a part of history, the physical rush and the range of emotions. That's what Georgie White was trying to show people. She wanted to get them down in the gorge so they could see the changing rock layers, get thrashed by the rapids and hike to ancient ruins. So they'd love it on their own terms.

And I think this is true of any kind of travel. You can't understand it until you feel it for yourself. I had that in mind as we approached the last big rapid, Lava Falls. Getting through it takes precision and force. We'd been talking about it the whole trip, and then, we were there. We stopped and scouted the Lava, looking at the move you must make right at the top, the rock you could get pancaked on, the massive hole in the middle of the channel frothing white.

Looking at it made the anticipation worse, but eventually we had to go, because you can't make it through the canyon without making it through Lava, so we got into the rafts and pushed off toward the horizon line.

I rode on the front of the boat, clutching the bowline, choking on my own laughter as we accelerated into the first drop, blinded by a wave of white water. I gasped as the boat pivoted and bucked. When we washed out at the bottom of the rapid, still upright, I felt a rush of adrenaline and relief, knowing exactly what it felt like to be there on the river.



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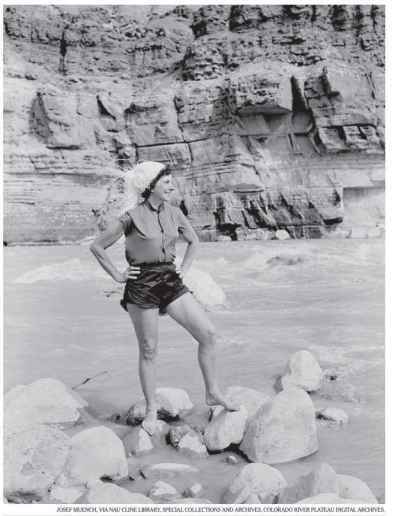

JOSEF MUENCH, VIA NAU CLINE LIBRARY, SPECIAL COLLECTIONS AND ARCHIVES, COLORADO RIVER PLATEAU DIGITAL ARCHIVES.

DRAPER WHITE/GETTY IMAGES

Navajo Bridge, above left, a rare modern structure seen from the Colorado River in the Grand Canyon. Georgie White, top right, one of the first people to raft the route. Above right, much of the trip is actually on calm water.

In a pivot, carrier invests in screens

American Airlines changes strategy, with plans to expand content and tech

BY RYLEY OBER

Seat-back entertainment will soon return for all passengers on domestic American Airlines flights in the United States, marking what industry experts say is a sharp departure from the company's previous strategy.

Last week, the airline announced that every seat on its narrow-body planes — single-aisle aircraft typically used for domestic flights — will be equipped with seat-back screens, including all new Airbus and Boeing planes, as well as retrofitted planes, starting in 2028.

The airline promises large-format displays with expanded content and tailored movie recommendations. And passengers can scrap the old wired earbuds, because these screens will also connect via Bluetooth to their wireless headphones.

The decision is a "sharp U-turn in strategy" for the airline and is part of a broader effort to redefine its customer experience, said Ben Mutzabaugh, the managing editor of the travel website The Points Guy.

Mr. Mutzabaugh said it seemed the airline was trying to catch up with rivals Delta and United airlines, which have better positioned themselves as "premium" airlines and have seen soaring profits.

KYLE COOPER/REUTERS

A spokeswoman for American Airlines said, "it has become increasingly clear" that passengers, especially younger generations, value access to multiple devices and larger screens.

"Today, there's little to differentiate American's screenless economy cabins from those of a no-frills budget airline," Mr. Mutzabaugh said. "Seat-back screens — coupled with the airline's other service upgrades — are part of a bigger effort by American to get back in the game as a true full-service carrier."

For a long time, American had screens in economy seats. But in 2018, a few years after its merger with US Airways, American began phasing out screens on short-haul aircraft in favor of content offerings that passengers could stream from their personal devices.

Industry experts said the larger shift away from screens was a way to cut the cost of technology upgrades and the additional weight, which burns more fuel. American currently offers seat-back screens on its wide-body planes, used mainly for long-haul international flights and some transcontinental flights.

An airline spokeswoman acknowledged the change and said that removing seat-back entertainment seemed appropriate at the time, as personal devices had become more ubiquitous.

Particularly after the Covid-19 pandemic, the spokeswoman said, "it has become increasingly clear" that passengers, especially younger generations, value access to multiple devices and larger screens.

In 2027, the airline plans to install Starlink, which is much faster than standard airline Wi-Fi. The satellite service is also being adopted by United, which as of June offered the service on 400 planes and expects that number to reach 1,000 before the end of the year.

What's in a code? Trump's initials.

The Palm Beach Airport has been renamed for the president in a rare change

BY CHRISTINE CHUNG

Palm Beach International Airport in South Florida is officially no more. The airport's jaunty logo, with the initials PBI in a bubbly font, has mostly been scrubbed from the terminal. Instead, a large sign hovers above the road outside the airport, greeting drivers with a golden, presidential-style emblem of an eagle surrounded by five stars, beside the words: President Donald J. Trump International Airport.

The renaming of the airport, which as of Aug. 18 has been fully adopted by the global aviation industry, appears to be a notable inflection point for an airport that in many ways seems frozen in amber.

The rebranding is without precedent. It's the first airport to be named after a sitting president. But changing an airport's three-letter code is also exceedingly rare, aviation industry groups said — which is why, for example, the code for Chicago O'Hare (ORD) still refers to Orchard Field, the facility's original name. Now, PBI is DJT. Though locals might continue to refer to the airport as PBI, the systems underpinning air travel — online bookings, baggage, ticketing, aviation navigation and flight planning — no longer will.

Airports are assigned three- and four-letter codes as part of a consistent global system that's been in place since the 1940s.

SCOTT MCINTYRE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

In a rebranding without precedent, the airline code for the airport is now DJT.

These codes are "considered permanent and are almost never changed — and then only with strong justification, primarily concerning air safety," according to a fact sheet from the International Air Transport Association (IATA), which assigns the three-letter codes.

The renaming has unfolded in phases to allow time for the aviation industry to sync up the systems that identify the airport to airlines, pilots, air traffic controllers and passengers.

For the past month, the misalignment between the airport's official name and its code baffled customers. Some said they were alarmed to receive notices from airlines and online travel agencies that their flight itineraries had changed.

Airport-naming decisions are made at the local level, said a spokeswoman for the Federal Aviation Administration, the agency overseeing civil aviation in the United States. Palm Beach International's renaming, which Gov. Ron DeSantis signed into state law in March, has been divisive. At least two lawsuits have been filed opposing the change.

Several thousand people have signed online petitions contesting the new name, citing its political partisanship and a shortfall of several million dollars required to update signage.

Mr. DeSantis defended the decision at a Tampa event earlier this year, stating that the action had been prompted by the Florida state legislature and not by the president. Donald J. Trump International Airport is in West Palm Beach, a 10-minute drive from Mar-a-Lago, the president's private club and residence in Palm Beach. Mr. Trump flies to and from the airport regularly.

Eight other commercial airports reference U.S. presidents. None of the eight other airports were renamed while the presidents were in office.

At Trump International, lingering evidence of the name change is muted. Signs have been updated, including for the main terminal's small art gallery. The gift shop sells toy replicas of Air Force One.

Last May, Palm Beach County commissioners approved a trademark and licensing agreement with President Trump's family business that requires the airport to choose from a list approved by the family business for a vendor for any branded merchandise.

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